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Jewels
of
the
Mass

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THE JEWELS OF THE MASS.

THE
JEWELS OF THE MASS.

A SHORT ACCOUNT
OF
THE RITES AND PRAYERS
USED IN
The Holy Sacrifice.

BY
PERCY FITZGERALD.

EIGHTH EDITION.

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LIMITED.
NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROS.

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THE JEWELS OF THE MASS.



I.

IN all conceivable acts in the life on this earth, the lowly, familiar, and unobtrusive Mass holds the first place. There can be no comparison with other great acts of the world: neither with heroes or their wars and conquests, nor with vast popular movements that have changed the face of a nation. One day it is certain this truth will be recognised in a very awful and overwhelming way. Even in the order of human dispensations, this simple rite is a phenomenon that might well distract and mystify the Protestant mind when speculating over the course of terrestrial incidents. All fashions flourish, decay, change, or become extinct. But for nearly twenty centuries the Mass has endured. It seems the one imperishable monument of the world which will never pass away. No one, of whatever denomination, but must forecast that here there is evidence of endurance, as permanent in the future as it has been in the past. Every hour the Mass strikes deeper and deeper roots. It seems to overrun the earth with all the fertility of some tropical

plant which defies the efforts of the most industrious gardener. With what mingled satisfaction and wonder does the Catholic recall the prophecy of Malachi, which he sees so largely, mysteriously, and literally fulfilled, that 'from the rising to the going down of the sun' this sacrifice should be constantly offered.' It has been found that without metaphor there is no moment of the twenty-four hours without its Mass. It literally travels with the sun. At every moment and particle of a moment the sacrifice is being offered; so that it seems like one unbroken act, continuous and uninterrupted. At any moment of the day or night the devout Catholic in these islands may transport his thoughts to the distant sacrifice, knowing that it is actually going on, and that he can join in spirit. In Europe at six in the morning there are Masses being celebrated; at seven, in portions of Africa, St. Louis, the Canary and Coral Islands. From eight to noon they are being said in South America, North America, and the various islands adjoining; and from noon to five o'clock, in portions of North America, California, Tonga Islands, Tahiti, etc. From six o'clock to ten at night, there are Masses going on in all the Australian colonies, in New Caledonia, Japan, Corea, etc.; from ten until three a.m., in China, Tonquin, Thibet, Madagascar, Abyssinia, Zanzibar, Central Russia, etc.; from three until five, in Asia Minor, Turkey, Egypt, Tunis, Algiers, and parts of Europe. And thus is wondrously fulfilled the prophecy, 'In every place there is offered to My name a clean oblation.' The Catholics of the world are estimated at about two hundred millions; and taking the proportion of Masses to every hundred thousand as one thousand, which is rather low, we shall find

that about two millions of Masses are said daily ! But if we put it at even half the number, what an idea it gives of the living force of this stupendous institution !

The Mass, being thus with us morning, noon, and night, while we wake and while we sleep, has become the most familiar and efficacious of all things. To the enemy of the Church it is a sore and hateful stumbling-block—to many, an object of pitying contempt. Of this class we have a specimen in the brilliant Macaulay, who, ‘Book in Breeches’ as he was called—omniscient in every department of literature—confessed that he knew nothing of this ancient and august ceremonial, until one morning, wandering into a foreign church, he saw Mass for the first time. Strange to say, this brilliant writer and philosophical historian, who saw beneath the outside crust of all things, and detected causes and workings under trivial disguises, could only see in the Mass a series of unmeaning postures, bowings, and genuflections, with ‘wipings,’ as he profanely termed it, of the chalice. This narrow view, astonishing in a reflecting Protestant, and acceptance of mere forms, without seeking for the great mystery which lay underneath, is a phenomenon ; and so superficial a view in a man of such gifts seems to be evidence of the blindness with which stiff-necked ‘culture’ is often afflicted. Reflection, unclouded by prejudice, would have shown him that these repeated ‘wipings,’ genuflections, etc., were but *accidents*, and that the essence must lie beneath, in the belief of a Real Presence. It seems almost fitting that this poor genius should have passed from the world he so idolized when reading, so it is recorded, the last new number of the *Cornhill Magazine* ! But for this

veil before his eyes, there would have been presented to his busy, almost voracious intellect a vast, far-reaching subject of study; with the problem how this series of 'mechanical offices' have held, for over eighteen hundred years, the most cultured intellects, the largest minds, and so been abundantly fruitful in historical and social events.

With this narrow and unphilosophical view may be contrasted the appreciation of a more solid and less showy intellect: a well-known picture, simply drawn, which touches the whole sacred mystery of the Mass. In a passage familiar to every Catholic, Cardinal Newman says: 'I declare, to me,' he says, speaking by the mouth of his hero Willis, in 'Loss and Gain,' 'nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming, as the Mass, said as it is among us. I could attend Masses for ever and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words; it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth. It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the evocation of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before whom angels bow and devils tremble. That is the awful event which is the scope and is the interpretation of every part of the solemnity. Words are necessary, but as means, not as ends; they are not mere addresses to the throne of grace; they are instruments of what is far higher, of consecration, of sacrifice. They hurry on, as if impatient to fulfil their mission. Quickly they go, the whole is quick; for they are all parts of one integral action. . . . So we, all around, each in his place, looking out for the great Advent, "waiting for the moving of the water," each in his place, with his own wants, with his own thoughts, with his own intention, with his

own prayers, separate but concordant, watching what is going on, watching its progress, uniting in its consummation. . . . There are little children there, and old men, and simple labourers, and students in seminaries, priests preparing for Mass, priests making their thanksgiving; there are innocent maidens and there are penitent sinners; but out of these many minds rises one eucharistic hymn, and the great Action is the measure and the scope of it.'

This community, this joining together of hearts by threads, no matter how far distant, is what makes the Great Act so unique and such a marvel. The Mass is going on, but it seems to overcome the limitations of space and matter. We are in the vast cathedral thronged to the doors, and the crowds of people stand afar off, almost in the porch. Pillars and arches stretch away in the distance until they grow indistinct; the great paintings at the end, the storied tracery of the window, 'richly dight,' become faint and indistinguishable. Some obscure priest is officiating, a simple private in the ranks; but at that moment he is literally greater than any on earth, and so all feel. At the altar, this central figure and its movements can be followed with certainty, for we know these movements and their succession by heart—nay, even this is indifferent, and we need neither see nor hear; for the great moment of the Act is revealed to us by the sudden lull, the bent heads of those about us. In Irish country churches, where the congregation has expanded beyond the church, there is often a crowd, vast as that within, gathered outside on the grass, standing with uncovered heads and looking earnestly in the direction of the sacrifice. *They* cannot see or hear; but, by the strange sym-

pathy of devotion, the progress of the Mass seems, as it were, telegraphed on from heart to heart.

And further, as an incidental effect of this universal sacrifice, we seem to owe to it all that makes a church really grand, ennobling, and effective. For it is the very nature of the sacrifice, when *seen* from afar off, to be thus effective. Hence the long-drawn aisles, the boundless waste, the smaller chapels, the cloisters even, all teem with purpose, use, and meaning. This seems to show that there can be no cathedrals but such as are Catholic; and, hard as such a statement seems, a little reflection will show its logical truth. For the purposes of mere ordinary prayer little more is needed than an enlarged room or hall, where such prayers may be heard distinctly. Aisles and Gothic devices attempted in modern Protestant structures are superfluous and theatrical, as it were, and perhaps interfere with the established form of worship; while former Catholic cathedrals converted to Protestant use have to be truncated and partitioned off into a smaller church, or the choir. This strict expression is seen in every portion of a Gothic church; the converging of all things to the altar, the direct and indirect reference of all things and illustrations to the Mass or the Blessed Sacrament imparting a life and full meaning to these great fabrics. Their present state in England, however splendidly conserved and restored, makes them little more than meaningless places of exhibition, displaying in every direction a waste of power, and requiring constant efforts to reconcile them with their present uses.

How many pictures occur to one as, with a tender retrospection, we think of the Mass, its effect, its convenience, its directness, and even business-like

character ! As on some chilly morn, daylight just breaking, the lamps extinguished, we find ourselves set down after a long midnight's journey, at five o'clock, say, in some German or Flemish town. There may be an hour or two to wait. Here is the grand Place, and not very far off rises the huge spire and towers of the 'dom,' shadowy, impressive and gaunt. The doors are open ; some shrouded women and a few men are entering. Its vast aisles are dark and empty, but here flits by a priest, a little boy walking before him, making for one of the dim mysterious chapels, separated by a picturesque iron grille. In a moment Mass has begun. In the old stalls, or scattered here and there, the congregation of a hundred persons follows the rite to the end. There is the communion for half a dozen. In twenty minutes all is over, and the traveller is standing out on the Place again under the shadow of the huge pile. Yet he feels himself not so far from home now, nor is he a stranger here. Something has been *done* ; not some careless or empty prayer ; he has seen and shared in a vast and profitable act, and goes on his way rejoicing. Yet this is but the duty of the day. Even in the lowest view, there is here convenience and a practicability which no 'service' or form of prayer of any kind could be made even to approach, no matter how earnest or well-meaning the exertion.

Or again, let us call up another picture, the new, or old and remote watering-place, where there is but a handful of Catholics, with a Mission just started by some pious soul. With difficulty, and after abundant inquiry, we discover the little red-brick building, with the hired loft to which we climb by a steep stair, a ladder in all but name.

There, in the mean chamber, are some twenty or thirty gathered, the poorest and shabbiest vestments, and all the shifts and devices of poverty. The priest, having come from a distance, begins the ceremonial. That scene has its poetry and its attractions; the devotion is more concentrated. The august rite seems itself to rise in dignity and majesty in proportion as it has been denuded of all costly magnificence. It is the Stable, or as poor as the Stable. Or again. Here are the darkened windows of the bedchamber, the figure of one who has gone home but the day before, laid out, decked with flowers, a crucifix laid on her gentle heart. Close beside is the hastily fitted altar, the family kneeling, the priest, black-robed, saying Mass for the Dead. This brings the mystery of death home, and unites the living body of our Lord with that other *now* living soul, who has just seen Him face to face. What more irresistible form of pleading could there be for the earnest and sorrowing devout, than this 'asking in His name,' who has actually descended into the very room with the departed one? We may not meet denial. For there is the eternal *promise*, that nothing thus asked shall be denied. Such a scene takes off the hideousness of death, and turns all into life in its truest sense!

All Catholics, unfortunately, do not regard this Great Act, as we call it, with the same awe or attention—and yet it should be approached much as some of the old writers have put it. 'If the sacrifice,' they tell us, 'were to be celebrated but once since the death of our Saviour, it would be an event of such tremendous significance as to excite the awe and reverence of the whole world.' And indeed we might conceive for ourselves what

would be our feelings if it were announced for the first time that our Saviour would descend from heaven upon an altar, and that there and then the sacrifice of Calvary would be renewed! Beside such an event all historical events would become tame and insignificant. It would be next in interest only to the original coming of our Lord. Yet most Catholics, from habit and familiarity, '*go to mass*,' as it is called, in a languid, irresponsible fashion, for the most part once in the week. How many look on it as some airy function or formula—a qualification, as it were, for Sunday, much as University students 'put in' their 'chapels.' In foreign countries how often do we see the bottom of the church crowded with men standing for the necessary twenty minutes, and then hurrying away with impatience, almost before it is concluded. How few make it a practice of attending on week-days, on the ground of there being 'no obligation'—a curious delusion! It surely ought to be a wonderful feeling for the Catholic to think, during the day, that he has actually witnessed this great Act, the change of bread and wine into the Lord's Body, and His descent upon the altar of men! The day that follows may be considered hallowed, or even, in a lower sense, a 'lucky one.' Indeed, those who have gained the long habit of hearing Mass *every day*, will own that when they have been hindered by some casualty, there has been a sense of incompleteness and discomfort, as though the whole day had been thrown out of gear. St. Augustine is indeed said to have declared authoritatively that whoever hears Mass devoutly shall never die a sudden death.

We have called the Mass a Great Act, as distinguished from ordinary prayers. When these

ordinary prayers are offered, there may be the element of uncertainty as to whether they have been sufficient; for there are many disturbing things, distraction, want of purpose, often cloudiness in the words used, and mechanical repetition. The prayer 'that moves mountains' is rare indeed. But with the Mass it is different. *There* the real Body and Blood of our Lord is brought on the altar at a given moment. It is known that it is being offered up; and he who chooses to seize the opportunity and ask for what he wants, need only appeal to the equity of God and His unfailing promise that He would grant what is asked in *that* name, and thus has assurance that he will not be refused. This is what gives the Mass reality. Indeed, nothing is so fruitful in reflections and speculations as this wondrous sacrifice. How strange and awe-inspiring to think, as we lift our eyes to the elevated Host, that we are at that instant gazing on the living *Son of God*, that there shall at last arrive a day when we shall look back from another sphere, perhaps, to this very moment, with either all hope, alas! gone for ever; or think with wonder of that time, as now, in regions of supernatural bliss, we gaze on the same awful Being!

One of the most picturesque, but, alas! heterodox of our writers—Thomas Carlyle—has given a striking account of the impression left on him by the Mass. He once found himself in the old Dom at Bruges: 'Few things,' he writes, 'which I have seen were more impressive. Enormous high-arched roofs—I suppose not higher than Westminster Abbey, but far more striking to me, for they were actually in *use* here—soaring to a height that dwarfed all else: great high altar-pieces with sculpture; wooden carvings hanging in mid-air;

pillars, balustrades of white marble, edged with black marble, pictures, bronze gates of chapels, shrines and votive tablets; above all, actual human creatures bent in devotion; these counting their beads with open eyes, or, as in still deeper prayer, covered by their black scarves—for they were mostly women—all this, with the yellow sunlight falling down over and beneath the new and ancient tombs of the dead: it struck me dumb, and I cared nothing for Rubens or Vandyck canvases, whilst this living ancient canvas hung here before me on the bosom of eternity. The Mass was over, but these worshippers, it seemed, still loitered.'

And again, when witnessing a Dead Mass at Ghent: 'I found a large squadron of priests and singers busy chanting Mass—a Mass for the dead, I understood. The sound of them was one loud, not unmelodious bray in various notes of the gamut, from clamorous, eager sound of petitioning down to the depths of bass resignation, awe, or acquiescence, which, reverberating from the vast roof and walls, was, or might at one time have been, a very appropriate thing. . . . Aloft and around, as I perambulated the aisles, where some few poor people seemed fervently joining in the business, the view was magnificent. The noisy hoarse roaring of the Mass all through these time-honoured spaces.' And this leads him later on to the striking admission—for *him*, Thomas of Chel-sea—that the Mass was 'the only genuine thing of our time.'

II.

Nothing strikes us so much, when reflecting on the Mass, as its structure—the amount of power that is, as it were, *compressed* into it—the logic, force, directness, and vigour of all that composes it. It is the best of engines wherewith to assail heaven, and break its portals open. Everything is to the point, nothing wasted. It is all laid out with the strictest reference to the grand central Act. Virtually the beginning and *end* of the Mass are the words of consecration—together with the communion of the celebrant. This is the essence; the rest being added out of devotion, and with the view of turning to the utmost profit all that has been done. But the sacrifice offers much more minute study and examination, and it will be found that everything connected with it bears wonderfully on the main object. It is, indeed, abundantly enriched and encrusted with JEWELS, and will well repay those who give time and study to the examination of their meaning.

To begin: the ceremonial dress used in celebrating the Mass is not as other dress. On ordinary occasions in life, where solemnity is attached to dress, nothing is connected with the act of robing, and, indeed, all assumed costume is now merely a survival and of little account. But in the case of the Mass very great weight and mystery and significance is attached to the mere assumption of these antique robes. There is something efficacious in the robing of the priest; and the mystery of the sacrifice seems to cast its shadow before. These are

not mere clothes, and while we watch the priest as he puts on these significant robes, we feel impressed by a sense of awe and reverence, and own that it is an admirable and fitting preparation for what is to follow.

Though the six articles used, the amice, alb, girdle, maniple, stole, and chasuble are strictly survivals of daily dress now obsolete, they are full of significance, and offer a living profit of their own. The prayers uttered when each article of dress is assumed are as interesting and expressive as they are efficacious. They elevate and adorn what would be an ordinary act. As one of the Fathers writes: 'Who should be so pure as he who takes part in such a sacrifice! Could the brightest sun's rays yield in splendour to the hand which distributes this flesh, to the mouth which is filled with this spiritual fire, or the tongue which is purpled with this precious Blood? Bring before you,' he tells the priest, 'the honour you receive at the table at which you are seated—He whom the angels can only gaze at with trembling or terror; rather, who dare not look at Him from the glory and splendour which dazzle them! For He serves us for food—unites Himself with us, and with whom we make one flesh and one Body.' In this language there is a glowing reality, a sense of nervous power produced by the greatness of the subject.

The first article of dress put on is the amice—a square piece of cambric with strings, on which is marked a small cross. This is kissed, drawn down over the head, and placed on the shoulders, accompanied by this prayer: 'Place on my head, O Lord! the helmet of salvation for repelling the attacks of the evil one!' This is a reminder to ask

for strength, and shows the need for it. The amice is large enough to cover the shoulders. About the year 900 it took the shape of a cap, worn while the priest was robing, and was then thrown back on the shoulders. This was actually in use in France so lately as the year 1711 at Narbonne, or Auxerre, at particular seasons. The drawing down the amice on the neck and shoulders has a kind of allegorical significance, as a sign of discretion and restraint in speech. 'Repress and regulate, O Lord, my voice,' runs the old canticle, 'so that I may not sin with my tongue, and shall merit to utter that which shall be agreeable to Thee.'

The alb is assumed with a supplication to this effect: 'Purify me, O Lord! and make me clean of heart—that, washed in the blood of the Lamb, I may possess eternal joy!' What could be more appropriate, or could anything be more significant than the alb itself, as accompanying such a prayer? When the girdle or cord is put on, there is said, 'Gird me, O Lord! with the cincture of purity, and extinguish in my loins the heat of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in me.' The maniple was originally a handkerchief tied to the left arm for convenience' sake, and is assumed to this utterance: 'May I deserve, O Lord, to bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, in order that I may joyfully reap the reward of my labours.' But the stole is the most significant of all. It is said to have been originally the band, or border, of a larger garment, and has been retained as a badge of what has been abolished. The words used are: 'Restore to me, O Lord, the stole of immortality which I lost through the transgressions of my first parents, and though I approach unworthily to celebrate Thy sacred mystery, still

may I merit eternal joy.' In spite of this strict antiquarian origin, we feel that the stole has significance as a mystic sacerdotal sign. There are many functions which we see take their note of solemnity from the putting on the stole with the accustomed kissing of the cross in its centre. Last of all, the chasuble is thrown over the shoulders to this fine prayer: 'O Lord, who hast said, "My yoke is sweet, and My burden light," grant that I may so carry it as to merit Thy grace.' This was called *casula*, or a small house, a quaint appellation, from its being so ample. It was also termed 'planet,' or wandering garment, from the difficulty of keeping it in its place. Formerly it was a vast cloak, such as was ordinarily worn, with a hole in the centre for the neck. It is interesting to know that there used to be preserved, even at the beginning of the last century, at Notre Dame, St. Denis, and other places, some of these vast garments; and priests, we are told, who did not mind being embarrassed by this huge expanse, used to wear them occasionally. It is easy to see how the form now in vogue became a modification of the older one, the folds on the arms being cut away to give free play to the shoulders, though this convenience was gained at the expense of picturesque effect.

The name of the late A. Welby Pugin will ever be associated with the revival of art in ecclesiastical furniture and vestments. His designs were based on the truest principles. To him we owe those rich, flowing robes—the graceful chasuble which drooped in ample folds about the figure. These for many years were in universal vogue, but it was found that these limp robes did not fit themselves to every figure, hanging in awkward envelopes about one that was small, and being attenuated in the case of

those that were tall. It was no surprise, therefore, when a time arrived when they were formally abolished by a decree of the bishops, subject to certain reservations, whereby the existing stock was allowed to be used till worn out. Certain churches, such as that exquisite gem at St. Lawrence, Ramsgate, built and endowed by Pugin himself, still retain these antique vestures.

It is of strict injunction that the priest should keep his head uncovered during the Mass, save for some special reason. At the beginning of the last century, in France, when flowing wigs were in fashion, it became a question whether this adornment did not violate the rule as to 'modesty of dress,' and in the year 1702, at Rome, the Pope, under pain of suspension, and even of imprisonment, forbade ecclesiastics to exercise any office when arrayed in a wig, which was ordered to be left in the sacristy.

Now, the vesting being complete, we may analyze the whole function before attending the priest to the foot of the altar.

We see that, first, 'strength for defence' is prayed for, then purity, then fortitude under trial and labour; next, fitness of disposition for the sacrifice; and, lastly, grace to win final reward. These aspirations, fervently made and duly marked by each act of vesture, surely make up one most efficacious act of preparation, and glorify what would otherwise be a mechanical function. Nay, those who look on must be affected in a similar way, and may turn it to their own profit. For, as in every other function of the Mass, we at an humble distance may take our part and join with the priest in his vesting.

III.

‘SUPPOSE,’ says Chateaubriand, ‘that the Mass were some rite of antiquity, and its forms and prayers had been discovered in the secular hymn of Horace, or in some old Greek tragedy, how would the commentators extol the dialogue with which the Christian sacrifice opens!’ The origin of the verse, ‘I will go unto the altar of God,’ which is so appropriate, is told to us by St. Ambrose, who describes how the newly-baptized faithful used to come in procession from the font, singing with pious enthusiasm the words, ‘I will go to the altar of God: to God who rejoiceth my youth. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth; they have conducted me and brought me unto Thy holy mountain, and into Thy tabernacles. And I will go unto the altar of God: to God who rejoiceth my youth. I will praise Thee, upon the harp, O God, my God! Wherefore art thou sad, my soul? Why troublest thou me? Hope in God, for I will still praise Him, the salvation of my face, and my God. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning.’

‘This,’ continues the poet, ‘is a true lyrical poem. The priest, of more age and experience, bewails the miseries of man, for whom he is about to offer sacrifice; the acolyte, full of youth and hope, sings the glory of the victim by whom he is about to be ransomed.’ Nor is this the mere view of a poet. It will be seen there is a sort of mutual re-assurance in this dialogue, a relying on the power of God and His promises. And the listener in the congrega-

tion himself joins in the dialogue. If he be troubled, as he may be, he is told that in God is his strength, and he will praise Him. He asks Him to 'send forth His light,' as He has done before ; for did He not bring us into His tabernacles? Therefore shall we 'hope in Him now,' as He will do so again. A pious lady, Madame de Chevreuil, who was a diligent attendant at Mass, when on her death-bed, was perpetually repeating these words : 'Hope in God, for to Him will I confess : He is the salvation of my face, and my God !' It will be noted that in the Mass for the Dead these verses are always omitted, and the priest goes almost at once to the Confiteor : for the reason, it is said, that the question, 'My soul, wherefore art thou sad ?' would then be inconsistent. The Confiteor—acknowledgment of sin and guilt, with an entreaty for mercy, and intercession for us on the part of the Blessed Virgin and the saints—is found in all the old liturgies, Greek as well as Latin, and is the suitable introduction of self-humiliation.

One of the most interesting features of the Mass is that many of its most familiar passages have an historical or doctrinal significance. Thus, in the familiar 'Gloria Patri,' the latter portion, 'As it was in the beginning,' was intended as a declaration against the heresy of the Arians, who had affirmed that the Son *had* a beginning. It thus becomes far more than an aspiration. It will be seen, indeed, that there are in other portions directed against heretics solemn affirmations of doctrine, so that a learned divine might from the Mass unfold a history of the Church.

The repeated 'Dominus vobiscum' is to be found in many portions of the Old Testament, and the answer of the congregation, 'With thy spirit,'

is in Timothy iv. 22, 'Dominus Jesus Christus, sit cum spiritu tuo.' What next follows is a supplicating invocation, joined in by priest and servitor, the latter representing the congregation: 'Thou, O God, wilt turn towards us and give us life, and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee. Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy,' etc. Then is added his own prayer for the congregation, 'Dominus vobiscum;' and he concludes this opening portion with 'Oremus,' and ascends to the altar. For up to this moment he has stood at a distance, preparing, as it were, to approach. 'Oremus,' he says, as he ascends; and what an admirable prayer he utters: 'Take away from us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our iniquities, that we may deserve to enter with pure hearts into the Holy of Holies, through Jesus Christ, our Lord!' It then concludes, as nearly all essential prayers in the Mass do, with 'Through Him and by Him,' being the note of everything that is asked for.

Next, bowing down with his hands upon the altar, the priest, with fresh importunity, renews his prayer for forgiveness, having already acknowledged his sins in the Confiteor: 'We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that Thou wouldst deign to forgive all our sins.'

All this has been simple preparation, the fitting of the soul, as it were, for what is to follow. And he who has earnestly followed in the steps of the priest, and passed through the various states of mind herein described, must be in a very fitting condition to profit by the Holy Sacrifice.

There was a variation of this portion of the Mass in use at Rheims so late as the last century, when at solemn Masses the priest, ascending the

altar, would say, 'Save us, O Christ, Saviour of the world.' Then asking the prayers of the assistants, 'Pray for me, brethren, as I shall for you,' he went on with the usual prayers. These variations in old ritual are often curious and interesting.

The 'Gloria Patri' was a common hymn of praise before it was adopted in the Mass. From a spirit of sadness it is always omitted in Masses for the Dead. In certain French churches it was the practice to repeat the Introit three times over; and at Rome during many ages, when the Popes said Mass, the choir continued singing the 'Kyrie' until he gave a signal for them to stop.

The sacrifice begins properly with the 'Entrance,' or Introit. It has been thought that this signifies the formal 'entrance' into the choir of the priest, to commence the more important portions of the Mass, or it may be the 'entry' on the business of the sacrifice. The changes of position, from one side of the altar to the other, are really significant of the arrangement of the old churches, when the priest and his attendants moved solemnly from one portion of the sanctuary to the other. The short verses from the Psalter here recited seem to furnish point to the particular Mass of the day, and the selection has always been admired on account of its appropriateness. The verse is exultant or sad. Where the Mass is in honour of some great saint, it becomes, as it were, a suitable descriptive motto or epigraph. As in the case of St. John and St. Paul, the martyrs: 'Many were the afflictions of the just, and out of all these the Lord delivered them: the Lord keepeth all their bones; not one of them shall be broken.' Or that most touching one in the Mass for the Dead: 'Eternal rest grant unto

them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. A hymn becometh Thee, O Lord, in Zion, and a vow shall be paid Thee in Jerusalem. *O Lord, hear my prayer; for to Thee all flesh shall come.* And a further pathetic act of symbolism in this instance is that the priest makes the signs of the Cross, not over himself, but rather downwards, as it were, over the grave where the dead are laid. It was Pope Gregory who selected most of the Introits.

Next follows the 'Kyrie eleison,' a solemn appeal in the middle of the altar, for mercy: 'Lord, have mercy on us! Christ, have mercy on us!' repeated, the one six times, the other three, the first utterance of Greek in the Mass. This leads to the great burst of praise, 'Gloria in Excelsis,' which, from its subject and lyrical measure, the position of the celebrant at the centre of the altar, the raising of the arms, offers a most striking and even dramatic contrast.

There are thus three languages used in the Mass, Latin, Greek, the words 'Osanna,' 'Alleluia,' 'Sabbaoth,' being Hebrew.

'As the priest utters these words,' a French writer tells us, 'he opens his arms, raises them to heaven, then brings them down upon his breast. In thus embracing in his thoughts and arms all those present, he seems to lift them with his own heart, and lay them at the feet of the Most High. Yet not being able to raise them aloft to draw down the heavens to himself, to meet the souls of the faithful in his charge, he encloses all within his arms.' As he utters the word 'God,' he bends his head in homage to the crucifix which is reared above him; and at particular places throughout the hymn the same reverence is paid.

This famous hymn was arranged or compiled by Pope Hilarion. The rubrics tell us that it is always said when the 'Te Deum' is used in the morning office, except in the case of Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday ; but it is not said in votive Masses, even in Paschal time, except in the Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nor in Masses for the dead. Up to about the year 1000, bishops alone were allowed to repeat this hymn, and on Easter Day alone priests were thus privileged. In the older rituals, such as the Salisbury, Bangor, and Hereford Missals, are introduced passages referring to our Blessed Lady. Thus, after the words 'Filius Patris' came 'primogenitus Mariæ Virginis matris,' and after 'tu solus sanctus' were added 'Mariam sanctificamus.' When concluding the 'Gloria,' at the words 'cum sancto spiritu,' etc., the priest signs himself with the sign of the Cross.

Few would suppose that, in the course of the Mass, this sign is made about forty times. But this, indeed, is the Oriflamme of our Church, borne triumphant in front of all things, and set in the highest places. Other Churches, while constrained to tolerate the Cross, do so in a sort of half-hearted way, provided it be not a crucifix. The Cross still remains the grand symbol, and neither column nor pinnacle can soar so high but that the cathedral spire o'ertops all, capped by its cross. The sign the Greeks used to make by putting the hand on the *right* shoulder, before the left ; we do the reverse ; the Greeks join the fourth finger to the thumb, so as to leave the other three unbent ; the Latins double down the last two fingers, a practice recommended by Pope Leo IV., A.D. 847, and continued by some of the religious orders. At the close of the 'Gloria'

the priest turns, and with due solemnity exclaims, 'Dominus vobiscum!' to which it is replied in the name of the congregation, 'And with thy spirit,' not 'with *you*,' because, as a French writer says, 'all is mysterious and spiritual in the function he is about to perform, so that his heart cannot fully appreciate it, unless his spirit is furnished with grace to comprehend the full truth of the prayers he is about to recite.' Note the symbolism and significance of this slight act.

At this moment the priest has come to the *centre* of the altar, bows down in token of humility, kisses the altar 'as if to imbibe from thence the waters of grace,' turns, spreads his arms, as if to take all present in, then joins his hands as if in prayer. Bishops, it will be recollected, always say, 'Pax vobis,' a custom which arose from the fact that originally it was the strict privilege of bishops alone to repeat the 'Gloria.' Some religious orders, however, have the same custom. Next follows the recitation of passages from the Scriptures, the Collect, Epistle, Gradual and Gospel, each of which has a distinct character. The first is a prayer, the next a homily or instruction, the third a morality, and the last a narrative.

The Collects are admired for their simplicity, beauty of style, and directness; 'from their terse union of doctrine and morality, their piquant shape and turn, they linger in the memory like a maxim or proverb,' and the accent or tone of the Church is here marked so forcibly that the most pious and touching of modern prayers cannot approach them. The Epistle, or 'Letter,' which follows, with the 'Credo,' represents the *instructive* portions of the Mass. During High Mass the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel is marked with much

solemnity. In the old churches there was a sort of rostrum or pulpit called the ambo, which the deacon or subdeacon ascended, the Epistle being read from a lower step. In some churches there was a separate ambo for each. This arrangement is shown in that most interesting of churches, San Clémente, at Rome, where one seems transported back to the days of the Catechumens, and where the plan testifies plainly to the awe with which the august rite was regarded. As is quaintly set forth in the old Book of Rites : ‘ At the north end of the altar there was a goodly fine lectern of brass, where they sang the Epistle and the Gospel, with a gilt pelican on the height of it, finely gilded, pulling her blood out of her breast to her young ones, and wings spread abroad whereon did lie the book when they did sing the Epistle and the Gospel. Also, there was lower down in the choir another lectern of brass, not so curiously wrought, standing in the midst against the stalls, a marvellous fair one, with an eagle on the height of it, and her wings spread abroad, whereon the monks did lay their books when they did say their legends at matins, or at other times of service.’ Another arrangement was that of an ambo with two flights of steps, the one for use by the Epistle reader, the other by the Gospel reader.

We next come to the Gospel ; that is, we are now to listen to portions of the narrative of our Saviour’s life. The priest crosses over from one side of the altar to the other, pausing in the middle to bow down and say a preparatory prayer. The book is borne away with a sort of state, and transported to the other side. There is a pause of expectation—the whole congregation rises to its feet with a mighty sound, and the Gospel is read. There is a certain

symbolism in this incident which seems to denote the transference of the Word from the Jews to the Christians; but these and many others of the kind seem rather pious than historical speculations. The prayer of the priest in the middle of the altar is truly impressive and effective for its purpose. 'Cleanse my heart,' he says, 'and my lips, Almighty God, who didst cleanse the lips of the prophet Isaiah with a burning coal: vouchsafe so to cleanse me by Thy gracious mercy that I may be able worthily to proclaim Thy Holy Name, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.' Before reading he signs the Cross three times upon his forehead, mouth, and heart, and at the close kisses the book itself, praying that 'through the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out.' (The Carthusians kiss only the margin of the missal.) Familiar as it is from long habit, the procession to sing the Gospel is always singularly striking and stately. The incense, the carried lights, the benediction of the missal—laid on the altar—the humility of the deacon, who kneels to be blessed himself, as if contrasted with the great function he is about to perform—all these things are wonderfully impressive and devotional.

At Paris during the last century the book was carried aloft by the deacon, and it was enjoined that the clergy in the stalls should stand up 'perfectly straight and without resting on any support.' During the earlier centuries *the staves* even were laid aside. These supports for the weaker brethren were in use up to the twelfth century. They were called 'reclinatoria;' owing to the length of the offices and the long time for standing up, they became necessary. They were made something after the form of a gibbet, so that the

elbows and arms could rest on them. Of a kindred character were those seats we find in the stalls of cathedrals and old English parish churches and abbeys, known as 'misericordias,' on which the occupant could half sit without appearing to sit. These were also combined with a sort of 'surprise'—as in the case of dozing or bending forward, when they toppled over and roused the sleeper. At the close of the chanting, the Book of Gospels is transported to the celebrating priest, and, the place being pointed out, he kisses it.

In the thirteenth century Pope Honorius III., under pain of excommunication, forbade the Gospel to be presented to any layman to be kissed, except to an anointed prince. And so lately as the year 1549 the Queen of Poland, who had not been crowned, was allowed this privilege only on special leave of Pope Paul III. In the Greek Church to this day the Czar and his Court all kiss the richly-jewelled book brought to them.

There have been many derivations suggested for the term 'Mass,' the most favourite being that from the dismissal given in the final 'Ite missa est.' There is a passage in a letter of St. Ambrose to his sister in which he tells her that, after dismissing the catechumens at the Gospel, 'I began to say Mass.' This dismissal before the Mass strictly began might very well come to be the term for the rite that followed the dismissal; it was natural, then, that the solemn essential portion should have this name. In the Eastern Church the proclamation for the departure of the catechumens is made to this hour, in the exact form prescribed in the old Greek liturgies. It was also practised in the last century at the Convention of Emperors, when the Protestant princes quitted the Church.

In the early days, after the Gospel, and after a short discourse, what was probably 'the Mass of the Catechumens'—all of it they were privileged to hear—terminated, and, with all unbelievers and public penitents, they had to withdraw. The deacon announced aloud, 'Holy things for the holy,' and at this notice there was a general rushing to the doors of Jews, pagans and others. The gates were then closed and guarded. This antique custom is not without its significance for us in modern days, for it is suggestive that at this point the real ceremonial of the Mass begins. From familiarity this idea is not likely to occur, the whole seeming to run on without break.

As the profession of belief, or the Creed, was now to follow, it was only the faithful that could join in it; hence the exclusion of all not belonging to the Church, or of those even under instruction. This shows that it is an act intended to be made personally by all present—not a mere recitation which concerns the priest alone. It should be remembered that this wonderful act of faith is charged with the most prodigious historic and religious significance, every line of it representing councils, with the wisdom and piety and struggles of Fathers and Doctors; the shedding of blood; changes in nations; and the destruction as well as the salvation of many. Read over carefully, it brings to the mind a complete view of history and faith—a short account of what the Saviour has done and suffered, and will yet do; what has been done for us, and all that is before us. Though called the Nicene Creed, this profession is properly that of Constantinople, expanded and emphasized by St. Gregory Nazianzen; and we are told that, as a composition, for its logical precision and clearness,

it excited the admiration of the assembled Doctors of that Council.

A whole library might be filled with the learning and controversies arising out of this famous creed. The three great creeds, as is well known—the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian—are affirmations or proclamations of Catholic doctrine, in reply to heretics and others who affected to find their views in the doctrines of the Church.

The Nicene Creed dates from the Council of 325, and successive councils, which affirm the true nature and character of the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Athanasian Creed, put forth in the seventh century, used to be read in many churches up to the end of the seventeenth century, and has ever been a 'bone of contention' in the Church of England. The Nicene Creed was always recited on great feasts, when the people were assembled, though it has not always been said in its present place. In the Greek Church it used to be said before the Preface; and in the first centuries, in some churches, it came just before the Consecration. To illustrate its historical bearing, the words 'born of the Father,' and what follows, embodied decrees of the Council directed against Arian heresies. It was affirmed that the Son was born of the substance of the Father, not of any other, nor was He created out of nothing; He was *before*, not *in* time ('ante omnia secula'). He was 'God of God' ('deum de deo'), not a creature of God; 'Light of Light' ('lumen de lumine'), that is, co-existing and co-eternal Light; 'true God of true God,' 'begotten, not *made*,' for what is made, is not of the same substance with him who makes it; whereas the Son *proceeds* from the Father, and is engendered. He is also '*consubstantial with the Father*,' which is the

grand declaration against Arius. The word used is 'homousion,' which, as St. Augustine says, signifies one and the same substance; just as our Saviour declared, 'I and the Father are *One*.' The amazing controversies that arose out of this one word are well known, while the ingenuity of heresy contrived, as Gibbon tells us, to engender no less than sixteen fruitful interpretations, each the parent of a particular heresy. The phrase 'by whom all things were made' is found in the first chapter of St. John.

At the solemn announcement of the most awful and momentous fact, beside which all known historical facts pale into triviality, 'He became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, *and was made man*,' in the ordinary Masses the priest genuflects in reverence; but in the last century it was customary at High Masses in France that the priests and assistants should kneel down at the words 'et incarnatus,' and remain kneeling until the 'crucifixus.' At a Council held in 1365, an indulgence of forty days was granted to all who thus knelt from the words 'qui propter' to the 'Resurrexit.' It will be noted that to the statement of resurrection on the third day is added the words '*according to the Scriptures*.' This is the declaration of St. Paul, who repeats it twice, after affirming that our Lord died for our sins, 'according to the Scriptures;' and also that He arose the third day, 'according to the Scriptures.' This is done to emphasize further this great truth, and implies that it was so foretold, and that the prophecies were carried out. 'Whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead;' this, again, is implied in the fifth chapter of St. John, '*Omne judicium dedit filio*.' 'Of whose Kingdom there

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shall be no end' are words taken from St. Luke. The third portion of the creed is devoted to the Holy Ghost, so styled because He *sanctifies*, or is the source of holiness, just as the Father is the source of power, and the Son the means of redemption. The Nicene Creed originally ended with the simple words, 'And I believe in the Holy Ghost,' which until the heresies arose was sufficient. Then it was declared that 'He was *Lord* and Life-giver,' and was neither the Father, nor the Son, but 'proceeded from both,' and yet was distinct. This 'distinction of persons' was assailed by heretics, while the Godhead itself was attacked by others in the fourth century. At the Council of Constantinople, therefore, the word 'Lord' was added. 'Life-giving,' that is, giving life to the dead; equality with the Father and the Son being announced by the phrase, 'who together with the Father and the Son is adored and simultaneously glorified.' 'Who spake by the prophets,' St. Peter having before declared that it was not by the will of men that the prophecies had been brought to us, but it was by inspiration of the Holy Ghost that holy men had spoken.

The conditions, the universality and catholicity of the Church are declared in the 'one Baptism,' the resurrection, and 'the life of the world to come.' In the fourth century the creed used to end with the words 'resurrection of the flesh,' and at the word 'flesh' the faithful touched their foreheads first—in sign that it was *this* flesh that should arise. There was here, of course, the implied belief that it was through the power of the Cross that this resurrection was to take place.

Up to this moment all has been preparatory—an exercise of humility, acknowledgment of

sin, prayer for aid, instruction ; with reflection on some passage in our Saviour's life, and a general profession of faith. These operations are intellectual ; but now the time for action is at hand.

We are now at the offertory. The chalice is now uncovered, and an offering made of the bread. The Church has ever looked with the greatest care and jealousy to the preparation of the elements, which it enjoins shall be of the finest and purest material. We find that there was a person called the 'Waferer,' who prepared the 'Housel bread,' a regular calling or trade. The breads were made, as they are now, in what was called a 'singing iron,' much, indeed, as gauffres are prepared. Hence the word 'houselled,' used for having received the Blessed Sacrament. It will be remembered how the ghost of Hamlet's father bewails his sore fate in being hurried from the world, 'unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneal'd'—that is, uncommunicated, unprepared (not 'appointed'), and unoled.

At this point a whole tide of antique associations presents itself, and the act of offering, simple as it might now appear, really expresses a striking scene in the old social life of the early Christians, showing the high importance of the various great functions of the Mass. For, in the primitive days of the faith, all who attended Mass invariably communicated, and thus what was consecrated was consecrated for *them* as well as for the priest. We can call up the scene, which is thus described in the Ordinal: 'While the choir is chanting, the faithful men first, then women, present their offerings of bread and wine in white napkins. The bishop receives the bread, the deacon the wine, which the latter empties into a large chalice. The ceremony of the offerings completed, they are laid upon the

altar, to which the bishop ascends. The deacon now fills the chalice, through a tube, with the wine. The subdean then comes with the water to the deacon, who pours it into the chalice in the form of a cross. Next follow the offerings of the priests and deacons, which are bread only—they alone being allowed to approach the altar, the bishop receiving it from their hands. The deacon then hands two of the loaves to the priest, who lays them on the altar beside the chalice.' In course of time, with flagging ardour, this was curtailed, and only the offerings of those who communicated were consecrated; the rest was accepted as the offering of those who came to witness the Mass. It is interesting to find that almost up to the time of the French Revolution something of this old rite remained. Thus, at Lyons, on certain feast days, two priests in the choir came forward and solemnly made offering of the bread and wine for Mass; and at various abbeys and churches throughout the kingdom there were other indications of the old rite. At St. Vincent d'Arras the superior of the community would ascend to the altar, bearing a chalice filled with wine and with bread on a paten; and at St. Martin des Champs each member of the community who was to communicate came with his own host to the celebrating priest, which was consecrated. The well-known *pain béni* distributed among the congregations in France is a survival of the old custom.

But now the priest, raising the bread in his hands and lifting his eyes to heaven, begins the prayer of Offering, in which every one present may join. It is a very powerful and effectual appeal. This lifting of the eyes is in imitation of the action of our Lord at the Last Supper, who raised His eyes as He took the bread in His hand. 'Receive,

O Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, this unspotted host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, the true, living God, for my innumerable sins, offences and negligences ; for all assisting here ; for all faithful Christians, living and dead, that it may avail both me and them for salvation and eternal life.'

This, when said by the devout listener or assistant with due earnestness and devotion, must put him in direct relation with all that follows, he having thus indirectly offered with the priest.

Carrying his chalice, the priest now goes to the corner of the altar to pour in the wine, and a few drops of water. This mixture is in imitation of our Saviour at the Last Supper. Apart from this, it is stated in the Acts of a Council held at Constantinople in the seventh century, that such had been the practice of the Apostles. And a statement of St. Justin, who came a few years later than St. John, bears this out. He says it was the custom to offer 'bread and wine mixed with water.' There is also a significant symbolism in this union which commends itself, namely, that of the blood and water that issued from the side of our Lord, which itself has been accepted as a sign of the sacrament ; and this is alluded to in an old liturgy. There is also an allusion to the union of the faithful with our Lord, the former betokened by the water, which is merged in the wine.

Here is the prayer which attends this part of the rite : ' O God, who didst so wonderfully establish the dignity of human nature, and hast more wonderfully reformed it, grant us, by the mystery of this water and wine, that we may be made sharers of the divinity of Him, who deigned to share our human

nature, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, the world without end. Amen.' In the Mass for the Dead the sign of the Cross made over the wine and water is omitted, on the ground, it is said, that the water representing the souls in purgatory, *they* need no benediction, being already united to the Lord. There is something appropriate in this prayer, and the same compelling *force* is noted in its various parts. Thus, the appeal is to God, who had so admirably constituted the dignity of human nature ; that is, by uniting to a little clay a spirit formed in His image and likeness, and who, when this creation fell or degenerated, once more interposed to save and renew it ; and on these gracious interpositions a powerful claim for aid is founded. Next the chalice is offered up. 'We offer to Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, and we implore of Thy clemency, cause it to ascend, as the savour of a sweet perfume in sight of Thy Divine Majesty.' And it should be noted that the words used are '*we* offer,' not as in the case of the bread, where the priest alone offers for himself. The reason for which is that by the mixture of the water with the wine the share of the faithful is symbolized and has been acknowledged. There are some varieties in this rite still subsisting. The Dominicans and Chartreux put the wine into the chalice *before* the Mass begins. The Greeks, following the liturgy of St. Basil and St. Chrysostom, put the water in before Mass, while they pierced, the bread with a lance, to the words, 'One of the soldiers pierced His side with a lance, and there issued forth water and blood ;' and by a curious rite water was again added after the consecration, and also before the communion.

Then, bowing down low and joining his hands and lifting them to heaven, 'We present ourselves,' he says, 'with a lowly spirit and a contrite heart; cause that our sacrifice to-day be so accomplished in Thy presence, so as to be agreeable to Thee, O Lord, who art our God!' Next, with opened arms, hands joined, and bending down, he implores the aid of the Holy Ghost: 'Come, Sanctifier, all-powerful, eternal God, and bless this sacrifice, for Thy holy name.' Then follows the lavabo, or washing of the hands, which is simply a recitation of Psalm xxv. Again bowing down, he invokes the Three Persons of the Trinity, offering Them this oblation in memory of the Passion and death of our Lord, and in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, begging also their intercession. Turning round to the congregation, he bids them pray, that 'my and your sacrifice may be acceptable,' and in answer to this appeal they pray that the Lord may receive the same from his hands 'to His own glory and our benefit.'

This 'Orate, fratres' would appear to be addressed to men only. We find, however, in the old missals of the tenth, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, this form of the 'Orate;' 'Pray for me, a sinner, you my brothers and sisters.' The rest of the invitation to pray, which is said in secret, was a later addition, as we find the Cistercians and Chartreux chiefly using the short form, 'Pray for me, brethren, a sinner, to the Lord God.' About the year 880, in the York use, the 'Orate, fratres' is thus answered by the choir: 'The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! the name of the God of Jacob defend thee! and send thee help from the sanctuary,' etc.

Now succeeds *the Secret*, the time of silence,

or mysterious separation—when a prayer is said which is changed according to the feast, but which has always the same purport, namely, that God would change the bread and wine, and with it change our hearts so as to be acceptable to *Him*. The ‘Secrets’ are really remarkable prayers, for the force as well as the variety with which this one topic is urged. As a French divine, the Abbé Moreau, says truly: ‘The theme is very short and very simple, almost always the same, so how does it escape the *ennui* of repetition? Read,’ he goes on, ‘for yourself, and you will own that the Church must have the secret of style to a wonderful degree, so as to lend the attraction of variety to what is almost daily the same in substance. The expression is, in truth, very plain, yet it is varied in an infinitude of ways. The words, happily chosen, are more happily combined and arranged; and here we see evidence of inspiration, for not only do we feel no tediousness in the iteration, but are always pleased and edified. I am fond,’ he adds, ‘of reciting our Secrets each day, because the simplicity of the thoughts and the simplicity of the expressions always seem to suit exactly the condition of one’s soul at the moment. Indeed, I scarcely seem to want anything else.’ A few specimens will show that this praise is not exaggerated.

Thus, for the tenth Sunday after Pentecost: ‘Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, worthily to frequent these mysteries, since, so often as the commemoration of this victim is celebrated, the work of our redemption is performed.’ For the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost: ‘Mercifully look down, O Lord, we beseech Thee, upon our service, that the gift which we offer may be accepted by Thee, and be the support of our weakness.’ For the sixteenth

Sunday after Pentecost : ' May Thy sacraments preserve us, O Lord, and ever defend us against the attacks of the devil.' And again : ' O God, who by means of this venerable sacrifice hast made us partakers of the one supreme Divinity ; grant, we beseech Thee, that as we know Thy truth, so we may accompany it by a worthy life.' For the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost : ' We offer to Thee, O Lord, this sacrifice of praise as an additional homage of obedience ; that Thou wouldst mercifully accomplish what Thou hast granted to us without desert of our own.'

We are now on the eve of the Canon, the most august and truly essential portion of the Mass, which extends from the Secret to the Pater noster. And note how *original* in its sublimity is that sudden and unexpected entrance, as it were, on the mysteries betokened by the speaking aloud of the words, ' For all ages of ages !' and the answer, ' Amen !' Here is what is truly *dramatic*, in its noblest sense. This phrase is, in fact, the conclusion of the Secret. The priest has been reciting to himself one of those fine invocations, say, ' Look down favourably upon these sacrifices, O Lord, we beseech Thee : that they may be profitable to our devotion and salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who livest and reignest with God, the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost,' and following these—which are at once a part of solemn faith, and recognition of the glory of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Ghost reigning above—these awful words rise to the lips, and *must* be outspoken, aloud and overpowering : ' *For all ages of ages !*' or ' For ever and ever,' which, however, scarcely gives the force of the Latin ' in sæcula sæculorum.' Abbé le Courtier thus describes the priest at this moment : ' His

hands resting on the altar, he seems to be aroused from a private communion with God. He has been at a distance from the congregation, and uplifted to the heavens; and to restore his communication with the Church on earth he must raise his voice. But from so great a height what sound would be so appropriate as "*through all ages of ages*"? And it is remarkable, too, that the beginning and the close of the Canon are marked by the same words. Just before the Pater noster, he seems to say to his people, "Lo! I have been in the secrets of God. For an instant I have been pleading directly with Him for you all."

This leads on to a potent and wonderfully significant dialogue. Now the answer comes, 'So be it!' or 'With all our hearts.' 'The Lord be with you,' he prays. He continues, 'Lift up your hearts!' to the answer, 'We have them lifted up!' Once more he invites them, 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!' that is, for all He is about to do. To which the reply comes, 'It is meet and just!'

Before the Preface, when the priest says, 'The Lord be with you,' it will be noted he does not turn round as usual to the people. There is a curious significance in this. It is in consequence of the old closing of the sanctuary doors, and of the drawing of the curtains, which shows at this moment that the movements of the priest could not be seen, and that the sacred mysteries were to be secret. In certain churches, at the beginning of the last century, the custom still obtained of drawing these curtains at each side of the sanctuary when the Canon began, and we still have in decorated sanctuaries these curtains at the side of the altar. This drawing of the curtains is referred to by St. Chrysostom in a majestic passage: 'At the moment that you see the

curtains drawn,' he says, 'think that you see the heavens opened and the angels descending.'

In some French churches within the last fifty years, and notably in the cathedral at Amiens, it was customary at the uttering of the 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,' for all the clergy in the choir to go on their knees, thus giving emphasis to their utterance. Father Le Brun was rather astonished when travelling in Germany in 1714 to observe that the priest commenced the Preface and Pater noster, uttering merely the opening words, the melody of which was taken up and continued by the organ.

That simple exhortation, 'Sursum corda,' has always been held in the Church to be full of value and significance, St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine dwelling on this 'admirable invitation,' to which, as the latter says, 'men through all the length and breadth of the earth daily respond.' He explains, too, the connection between the passages. 'We are told,' he says, 'to raise our hearts to God, and this we cannot do but by His aid. Hence our duty to "give thanks to the Lord" for such a benefit, and from our obligation and gratitude "it is meet and just" so to do.'

'As there is now,' says St. Cyril, 'something to take place, of the most secret kind, which surpasseth all manner of intelligence, we now shut the doors. But then there cometh and appeareth Christ before us all, visibly and yet invisibly at the same moment; invisibly as God, but visibly in the flesh. Yet He allows and gives His sacred flesh to be handled, for we draw near through God's favour, to share in the mystic Eulogia, taking our Lord into our hands.'

The Sanctus is found in all the early liturgies,

in that of St. Cyril, in the Apostolic Constitution, etc. The Council of Vaison, in A.D. 529, enjoins its being said at all Masses, 'for so sweet and desirable a hymn could not be cause of tedium, even though one uttered it night and day.' All used to join in uttering this hymn. St. Ambrose points out that it is an assertion of the Trinity, not only in the repetition of the word 'Sanctus' uttered three times, but in the context. The words 'Lord God of Sabaoth' signify 'God of armies,' and 'Sabaoth' has been retained in the Missal, though in the Vulgate we have 'exercituum.' The early texts had Osanna instead of Hosanna. It signifies 'Save us instantly, Thou in the highest.' 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord' are words taken from Psalm cxvii., and it is interesting to think that this passage was one of those passages read in the Temple by the Scribes and Pharisees, which convicted them of rejecting the Redeemer there so clearly described.

Then how dramatic is the entrance on the Preface, '*Truly meet and just is it*, fitting and salutary, that always and everywhere we should give thanks, Holy Lord, Father, omnipotent, eternal God. Through Christ our Lord.' And then the more impressive 'Through whom the angels praise Thy Majesty, denominations adore, the powers tremble, the heavens and virtues of the heavens and blessed seraphim celebrate exultingly, as voices with whom we pray, that thou wouldst bid our voices be received when we say: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! The heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna on high! Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna on high!"'

This, taken with the solemn introduction, is a

truly inspired burst ; the bells ring, the priest bows down as he says it, and drops his voice ; there is a rustle and movement of a vast congregation falling on their knees—and then a subdued *hush* and expectancy !

Now we are at the Canon. From this moment all is to be strict silence and mystery. As the priest turns over the leaf of the Missal, there will be noted the large and striking picture of the crucifixion, which is no arbitrary embellishment, but a strict matter of rule, and, for those at a distance, so large as to be seen plainly ; a sudden and striking reminder of the original sacrifice, while it marks emphatically the entrance in the new division of the Mass. Formerly this image was figured on a more modest scale, it being merely the initial which began the ‘*Te igitur*,’ which was interlaced with a small picture, the letter T lending itself to the shape of a cross. It used to be the custom for the priest to stoop down and kiss this picture, a practice testified to by the dark stain, akin to a thumb-mark, in many an old Missal.

The word ‘Canon’ is said to mean literally a straight stick, which betokens a rule or standard to which other things conform ; but it properly signifies the fixed, invariable order of rite and prayers, which never changes, like other portions of the Mass. Five prayers precede the grand *act* of all, and five succeed it. These are all compounded of such fitting and august elements as the words of our Lord Himself, certain traditions of the Apostles, and some institutions of the Popes. ‘There is not a word,’ says Père le Courtier, ‘which does not lift up the soul or breathe religion and piety. Prayers so august in their antiquity and language leading up to a Divine centre, the grandest *action*

of heaven and earth, deserve the deepest and most absorbing attention.' The character of these prayers we might almost call Divine. For only consider; our Lord is about to descend from the heavens; in a moment He will lie there; hence, is not this the time for asking favours, when the greatest of conceivable favours is to be conferred? Here we might hesitate whether to ask for ourselves or our friends, or for the dead, first of all. But the order chosen is, first for others—for the living; next for the Church; for ourselves: later for the dead, and for ourselves again in the next life. There is, besides, an earnest invitation to all above, to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, to join and help us.

The first prayer commences with *Te igitur*: 'To Thee, therefore,' in which there is a large significance; the 'therefore' covers all that has been done and said before, and thus seems to mean, 'in consequence.' The prayer itself runs, 'We, therefore, humbly pray and beseech Thee, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord' (here he kisses the altar), 'that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept and bless these gifts, these presents, these holy unspotted sacrifices, which, in the first place, we offer Thee for Thy holy Catholic Church, to which vouchsafe to grant peace; as also to protect, unite, and govern it throughout the world, together with Thy servant *N.* our Pope, *N.* our Bishop, as also all orthodox believers and professors of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.' Then follows, 'Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, *N.* and *N.*' That is, Give a blessing to 'these presents,' with a blessing on the Church, also, on the Pope and all his followers. This is set out with appropriate and expressive gestures.

‘Follow,’ says a French writer, ‘any priest, in all his movements. Does he not suggest Jesus Christ Himself in the cradle or on Mount Calvary, who upturns his eyes to his Heavenly Father, and with whom he unites himself by imprinting a kiss upon the altar, as if to draw from thence all blessings?’ And this double attitude is pointed by prayers appropriate to each. At the name of the Pope an obeisance is made, as to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. The sign of the Cross is made in a large and emphasized way, three times at the words ‘these gifts,’ ‘these presents,’ ‘these holy unspotted sacrifices,’ as a French writer says to include the whole world.

This moment, too, is chosen for the ‘Memento’ of the living, a word one is often inclined to use in a conventional way. It is a ‘calling to mind,’ or ‘remembrance.’ But it is infinitely more forcible, being a request to the Almighty to remember us, just as the good thief addressed himself to our Lord on the Cross, ‘Remember me, *call me to mind*, O Lord, when Thou dost come to Thy kingdom.’ There is a grand confidence and boldness in this form, as though it were founded on what is to follow. In the early ages there was a table called a ‘diptych,’ on which a list of persons, including the Pope, a number of bishops and high personages were set out by name. Formerly, indeed, there used to be three of these diptych lists, one setting out the names of the Apostles and Martyrs, another those of the faithful then living and distinguished for their rank or services to the Church, including also the Pope, reigning sovereigns, magistrates, etc. The third contained the names of the dead. It became impossible, at last, to read out the lengthy catalogues, and when the Roman ritual supplanted all others, the list of special Roman saints and martyrs only

was retained, a sort of selection from the rest, and which accounts for its seeming arbitrary character.

‘Remember,’ now goes on the priest, ‘O Lord, Thy servants, men and women, *N.* and *N.*’ And here he lifts up and spreads his hands, joining them devoutly on his breast, while he *names* those he prays for. Then makes a silent pause. In old days the deacon used to give out the names aloud. Spreading wide his arms, as if to take in the earth, he goes on, ‘And of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known unto Thee; for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise for themselves, their families and friends, for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of their safety and salvation, and who pay their vows to Thee, the eternal, living and true God.’ ‘Whose faith and devotion are known to Thee’ points to the devout, that is, to those who are present and following the sacrifice with attention, which, Le Courtier says, excludes the profane and inattentive. The phrase, ‘for whom we offer, or who offer,’ is a reference to the ancient days of actual offerings laid on the altar; but, as has been pointed out, the ‘or’ is not disjunctive, but is read as ‘and,’ the offering signifying those who are now joining with the priest. This offering is made in a regulated order ‘for ourselves, for our families and friends, for their souls and redemption, for the hope of health and safety, and who now offer their prayers to Thee, the eternal, living and true God.’ The phrase ran, down to the year 1000, not ‘for whom we offer,’ but ‘who offer to Thee,’ which, of course, referred to the offerings brought by those when hearing Mass. All this shows how much the hearer of Mass was assumed to be connected with

the sacrifice, either by these personal offerings, or by his mental share in the incidents.

‘Thus,’ says Le Courtier, ‘the Church arranges us round the victim, in the due and correct order of our dignity, rights, and dispositions, and teaches us what we should ask from God, at the moment He is about to descend to us.’ We should, therefore, follow this order strictly, passing from stage to stage with as much profit as logic. It is natural that, having called in aid those below and joined them with us, we should next enter into communion with those above and passed away. And so he goes on :

‘Communicating with, and honouring in the first place the memory of the glorious and ever Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ ; as also of the blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all Thy saints ; by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.’

There is no mention of the Sovereign in the Roman Missal, though the practice has always been maintained on the authority of St. Paul. Even in the days of persecution, the Christians are found praying for the Emperors. First named is the blessed Virgin, the Mother of God ; and then follow twenty-four saints, twelve Apostles, and twelve Martyrs. Linus, Cletus, and Clement were contemporaries of St. Peter. St. Paul is joined with St. Peter. Some of the ancient Missals added here other saints, and in France it was customary to add

the name of the patron saint of the place. As the priest implores that by the aid of his prayers and merits we may be faithful in all things, 'by the aid of Thy protection,' he joins his hands, and adds, 'Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.'

Thus, every step of the ground is being prepared and made sure as we ascend to the Holy of Holies. We next see the priest place his hands solemnly over the chalice while these words are uttered :

'We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, graciously to accept this oblation of our service (or servitude), as also of Thy whole family ; dispose our days in Thy peace, command us to be delivered from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of Thy elect. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.'

This is one of those efficacious and purposeful prayers which the practical will find truly profitable. It was added by Pope Gregory, and is praised as full of a lofty sense. But this 'peace' has been otherwise defined, and is a peace of soul unintelligible to the world. 'The peace I give you is not as the world gives it,' for it is a peace that will exist in the midst of worldly troubles. Here again the 'therefore' is large and significant, appealing to all that has been done before. The prayer itself is a very beautiful and effective one, and may be said by the hearer at any time, or at any moment, as an offering of the Mass, and for what is asked for in return, 'Dispose our days in Thy peace, preserve us from eternal damnation, and cause us to be ranked in the number of Thy elect.'

Next follows *Quam oblationem*, a prayer cited by St. Thomas as the work of St. Augustine. The words used in this prayer, that God would make the oblation in all things 'Benedictam,' 'adscriptam,' 'ratam,' 'rationabilem,' 'acceptabilem,' have each

significance. The last four seemed included under the head of Benedictam. *Adscriptam* that is admitted, and not rejected; *ratam*, i.e., ratified, permanent and irrevocable, producing the result of attaching us firmly and lastingly to God. As to *rationabilem*, it has been remarked, that with the old sacrifice before our Saviour, this could not be said, because irrational things, such as animals, were offered. It is asked that the offering may become a human form endowed with divinity; it seems to mean that the offering having rational results, founded on our proper intelligence, we may profit by it as our reason tells us we should. Truly, 'acceptable' seems a befitting word, as nothing could be so acceptable to God as His own Son.

'So that it may become for us,' (*nobis*) . . . 'the blood and body of Thy most beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ.' Here it has been said it should be noted with what confidence and simplicity the Church demands so vast a miracle as this change into the blood and body of our Lord; just as the Scripture records the *Fiat Lux*, and the reply the Blessed Virgin, 'Be it done according to thy word.' 'For us,' too, has a pointed significance

A mysterious secrecy has ever been preserved during the great act of consecration. In all the Greek liturgies we find that the doors were shut before the mystery began, and in the splendid mosque of St. Sophia, which the Emperor Justinian built, are to be found lofty galleries reared on columns, whence a view of the altar could be obtained, and where the Emperor and Empress were seated during Mass. It was the custom also to draw the curtains in front of the gates. It has been noted that in all the creeds, even in the Apostles', there is no mention of the grand dogma

of the Real Presence. This is accounted for by Cardinal Newman, who supposes that the omission is owing to the ancient *disciplina arcani*, which withheld the sacred mystery from catechumens and heathens, to whom the creed was known.

We are now on the eve of the great act—the next and last step being a prayer that the great work may be done : ‘Which oblation do Thou, O God, we beseech Thee, vouchsafe in all things, to make blessed, admitted, ratified, seasonable, and acceptable, so that it may be made for us the Body and Blood of Thy most beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ.’

It has been contended that these words almost belong to the Act of Consecration ; at least many of the great Fathers, especially St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, have held it, a French divine says, as ‘an ensemble of mysterious and heavenly language of strange force in connection with the consecration.’ It will be noted, that at the emphatic words ‘*for us*,’ the prayer is set off and emphasized with the sign of the Cross made no less than five times over the chalice and over the host.

Now, at last, taking the host in his hands, the priest repeats the words, the most momentous and powerful in the world. And a day will come, alas ! when all shall own with awe, wonder, and confusion, their amazing and superior efficacy. ‘*Who, the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with eyes lifted up heavenwards to Thee, O God, His Father omnipotent, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples. Take and eat you all of this, FOR THIS IS MY BODY.*’

These words uttered, the change is made. Nothing is more wonderful in all this than the

mysterious compounding of the two natures and offices, the priest now being priest, now speaking as our Saviour Himself. For an instant He seems to be seated at the table of the Last Supper, the disciples sitting round, the bread in His hand. It is His voice and His words. As has often been explained, these are what are called 'operative words;' it is not a power simply delegated to the priest, as in some of the other sacraments, such as Confirmation, but it is in his pursuance of the Divine command to repeat the act of our Lord and use His words that the efficacy lies. 'He speaks no more in his own name, but in that of Jesus Christ; in fact, he is the organ of our Lord, who speaks and consecrates in His name.' There is something truly supernatural in this combination. 'We must confess,' says Le Courtier, 'that the imagination becomes troubled, the soul confounded, voice fails, and the pen drops from the fingers as we stand at the edge of the abyss of wisdom.' It will be seen that so far the strict words of consecration are four; the rest are often supposed to be entirely from the Scriptures, but are in part from the old liturgies.

The priest lifts his eyes heavenwards, as indeed was customary with our Lord, before such miracles as that of the multiplication of the loaves and the raising of Lazarus. At the words 'giving thanks' he bows down in grateful homage; at the word 'Blessed' he blesses. The 'breaking' is reserved to a later time. The words 'all of you of this' are not in the Gospel, but are handed down by tradition, as is also the little word 'for' (*enim*).

'Hoc est, enim, Corpus Meum,' are words invariably spoken slowly, and with an awful sense of solemnity. Instantly the priest is a priest again;

he bends his knee, the bells ring, he raises the host aloft with both hands, lays it down, and kneels adoring!

This is a moment that has employed the art of the painters and poets for hundreds of years. One of the grandest triumphs of Raffaele is in the Loggia of the Vatican, showing the moment of Consecration, with tiers of saints and angels looking down on the group below of apostles and doctors, gathered round the lowly altar on which is the simple host. How many pictures have there been in the mind's eye or on the canvas of the far-off perspective at that moment—the cathedral aisle, the vast altar spreading aloft in a splendid luxuriance of pillars, and the grouped marble angels flying upwards and downwards! with the dim, small, white figure below, its arms raised aloft, while below all is stillness and every head is bent!

'In like manner, after He had supped, and taking this glorious chalice into His holy hands, also giving thanks, He blessed and gave it to His disciples, saying, 'Take and drink of it, all of you. *For this is the chalice of my blood, of the new and eternal Testament: the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many, unto the remission of sins.*' These words the priest says with head bent over the chalice. He then bends his knee and raises the chalice aloft, as he had done the host, and adores once more on his knee.

It will be noted that it was 'after He had supped' our Lord took the chalice in His hands. But, in the historical order, at the beginning He had partaken of another—one which was unconsecrated, and to which He referred when He declared that 'He would drink no more of the fruit of the vine.'

The second and consecrated chalice is clearly referred to in the twenty-second Psalm, where, in a remarkable way, it is described. Indeed, it would be interesting here, if one had the learning and talent to do so, to bring together all the passages in Scripture which refer to the grand Truth, as they illustrate it in the most forcible way.

Thus, the consecration by the word seems pointed at in Psalm cvi. :

‘He sent His word and healed them.’ And of the wine changed into the sacred Blood : ‘Thy inebriating chalice, how glorious it is !’

Or, as in the opening of Book IV. of ‘The Imitation’ :

‘Come to Me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. The bread which I will give you is My flesh for the Life of the world. He who eats My blood remains in Me and I in him. Unless ye eat My flesh and drink My blood ye shall not have life ; in the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life.’

The words, ‘Take and drink of this, all of you,’ are injunctions to communicate in both kinds—but addressed to the Apostles and to priests only. Two passages of St. Paul’s establish the distinction of one kind for the laity, and of both kinds for the priests. When merely announcing the simple doctrine he says, ‘So often as you eat this bread and drink of this chalice, you announce the death of the Lord,’ which applied to the priests. But when speaking of penalties for unworthily receiving, which applies to all, he uses the alternative, ‘Whoever eats *or* drinks unworthily’ is—in *either* case—guilty *of* the body and blood of the Lord.

The privilege of communion in both kinds was allowed to the French kings at their coronation. It

is not generally borne in mind that on Good Friday the priest communicates in one kind only, viz., the bread consecrated the day before. In the passage, 'The new and eternal Testament, *the mystery of faith*,' here the words 'eternal' and 'the mystery of faith' are not found in the Scripture, but in very old liturgies. It is 'the mystery,' not the 'secret' of faith—and it is remarkable that the Greek text in the next passage runs, '*is shed for you*,' presenting a dramatic actuality; 'for many,' that is, though our Lord died for *all*, and, as it were, thus *qualified* them for salvation—the application of His merits and His death rests with the 'many,' who choose to work out their salvation. 'Do these things in remembrance of Me'—that is, not as a *souvenir*, so-called, but 'to bring Me before you.' For to this must be added the significant supplement, that it is 'to announce His death until He shall come,' which again is not the empty platitude it has been made by many Protestant sects of a mere informing the faithful that our Lord has died for us—but signifies actual realization and performance of the act of His death, until the end of the world shall arrive.

Then comes the benediction—for our Saviour blessed, prayed, and uttered the words. An old writer, assumed to be St. Ambrose, has said of this prayer that they are heavenly words, and that the 'blessing' is more powerful than nature, since it changes nature. St. Basil says, 'We do not content ourselves with the words reported by the Apostles and the Gospel, but we add others, which come before and after, which have much influence on the mysteries, and which we have learnt from the unwritten traditions. The mere blessing by our Lord multiplied the loaves.' Tradition and the

Fathers hold clearly that the mystic words are 'This is My body.' 'Taking bread,' says Tertullian, in forcible language, 'He made of it His body, in saying, "This is My body."' And thus St. Chrysostom says, in words that vindicate his name, 'When you see the priest offering the Holy Sacrifice, uttering the prayers, surrounded by the saintly people, who have been washed with the precious blood, and the Divine Saviour who offers Himself on the altar, can you believe yourself still on earth? should you not rather believe yourself lifted up into the heavens? O wondrous miracle! O goodness! That He who sits at the right hand of the Father should be, in an instant, in our hands, ready to give Himself to those who will receive Him.'

There was a fine awe-inspiring passage in the older liturgies, but since removed, when, after the Consecration the deacon broke the silence, and in a loud voice proclaimed, 'Holy things are for the holy!' This prompted St. Chrysostom to an inspiring utterance. After dwelling on the change from the profound mysterious silence, 'with a loud voice and awful tone,' he says, 'like some herald, raising his arm aloft, standing at his full height, conspicuous to all, and breaking that dead silence, he calls on some to draw near, but warns away others.'

'At this moment,' says Père Le Courtier, 'as with the cross, all is accomplished. The heights of heaven have descended, the earth has begotten her Saviour, He has become incarnate in the hands of the priest; He is born again on the poorest and shabbiest of altars, just as at Bethlehem He was in a crib. He is adored now by kings and shepherds, rich and poor; He is in the hands of the priest as

He was in the arms of Simeon, submissive, silent, patient.' And in another view, He is on that table, as He will be at the Judgment, offering the cup of life and death, of destruction, of preservation, the pledge of eternal glory, if we wish to accept it. 'As often as you shall do this.' Wondrous promise and communion, indeed ! 'The priests,' says St. Jerome in forcible language, 'by their holy mouths, *make* the body of Christ, Christ Himself through them, performing this great miracle.'

From this moment the hearer of Mass will be conscious of a strange mysterious change and calm ; and any one who at all seriously reflects, and with whom faith is not simply mechanical, must be deeply impressed at the silence and stillness that prevails. The Emperor Justinian once issued directions as to the ritual here, and gave an order that the portions hitherto said in secret should be uttered aloud. As a strange and exceptional instance, his wishes were carried out. In consequence, the Scripture passages of the consecration were uttered aloud, and 'Amen's' were introduced so as to give the assistants a share. The patriarchs of Alexandria and of Antioch accepted the change. In the Liturgy of St. Cyril, and in those used in the former churches, the words of consecration thus ran :

Priest : He took bread.

People : *Amen.*

Priest : And gave thanks.

People : *Amen.*

Priest : And blessed it.

People : *Amen.*

This mode was attempted to be revived at the beginning of the sixteenth century in France, on the ground that the great mystery of the Canon

should be recited aloud by the priest, not in silence. As this was a matter that was essential, and had been settled for centuries by the voice of the Church and the opinions of the Fathers, the claim seems to have been prompted by the Gallican spirit, which was then strong. A step, too, of an extraordinary kind was taken at this time, and shows how rife this new spirit was, and how dangerous it was likely to prove. The Diocese of Meaux was revising its Missal, abolishing or altering certain local usages of ritual, and the duty of revision was entrusted to a certain canon of the chapter. When the work appeared, it was discovered that the reviser had introduced certain rubrics and directions as to the mode of saying the Canon. In the most solemn portions relating to the words of consecration were found 'amens' preceded by the rubrical 'R'; while every amen used by the priest was transferred to the assistants. This entailed the saying the words in a loud voice, as otherwise the responses could not be uttered, and thus the priest's part in the Canon was shared with others. There was the objection that the rubric was precise, that the words were to be uttered 'in a low tone of voice.' When discovered, this attempt was at once condemned in councils and pastorals of the Bishop of the diocese. But it appears there was a feeling among some of the clergy in favour of the change, and some persistence in adopting it.

Let us hear the author of the quaint 'Layfolk's Mass Book.'

'Look, Pater Noster, you be saying,
When the Chalice is up heavenwards,
Then the time is near of *sacring*.
A little Bell is now to ring,
Then shall you do reverence

To Jesus Christ's awful presence !
 That he may loose all baleful bands,
 Therefore kneel and hold up thy hands,
 And with the inclination of thy body,
 Behold the Elevation reverently,
 Such prayer there then thou make
 As thou likest best to take.
 Some men pray and air
 Each in his best *manner*.
 Short prayer should be without dread ;
 And, therewith, a pater and crede
 I set here, which may be said
 If you be unprepared.
 Welcome, Lord, in form of bread,
 For me thou sufferest and died.
 Thou didst bear the crown of thorn,
 Suffer me not to be forlorn ;
 Thy mercy, Jesu, would I have,
 And I for fearsomeness it crave,
 But you bid us ask and have.
 Sweet Jesu, make me save,
 And give me wit and wisdom right
 To love thee, Lord, with all my might.'

In many of the older Greek liturgies the elevation of the Host did not take place till just before the Communion, after the striking ceremonial of opening the sanctuary doors and drawing the curtains, when, as St. Chrysostom says, 'the portals of heaven seemed to be thrown open, and our Lord and the angels were revealed.'

In the Russian Church to this day, the practice obtains of giving the Communion to infants at Baptism ; and Lady Bloomfield, in her Memoirs, describes the Metropolitan as placing the host in the mouth of one of the royal infants. But in the times of the early Christians there is curious evidence of the familiar and intimate relations of the congregation with the Blessed Sacrament, showing that it was indeed their 'daily bread.' Thus there have been found in the catacombs little square-

shaped silver locket, in which the faithful were allowed to place the Eucharist and take it home to their houses. It was customary also for the Pope to send to the bishops in Asia portions of the consecrated bread in token of union and communion.

Up to the seventeenth century, in Paris and in many other churches of that country, and in the last century at Sens, it was customary to say the words, 'Do this,' etc., when actually elevating the host. In France it is said that a somewhat strange custom still obtains in the great hunting districts on St. Hubert's Day, or other festival connected with the Chase. Mass is celebrated before the hunt, and all the dogs, with the huntsmen, etc., are drawn up outside the church. At the Elevation the signal was given, and all the dogs are made to give tongue, the horns sounding a *fanfare*! It was stated, however, that many of the English hounds—owing, perhaps, to their old Protestant associations—remained obstinately mute, and could not be got to join in this homage. Many, too, will recall the picturesque military display in the French churches when, just before the Elevation, the soldiers are ordered to stand to arms; the words of command are noisily given, and arms presented, followed by the clattering of muskets on the pavement.

In certain old *gestes*, and in the *Chanson de Roland*, allusion is made to a striking and pious custom practised by knights when in the field, or on the eve of battle. No priest being at hand, one knight would administer to the other a sort of memorial of the holy Eucharist in the form of three blades of grass. In one quaint old poem, the 'Roland,' it is thus described:

'Entre ses bras le prist,
Prist une fuelle d'erbe,
A la bouce le mist—
Dieu le fait acconnoistre,
Et ses pechés—
L'amme part.'

From the moment of consecration it will be seen how radically all has changed, and the spirit and intention of every action becomes wholly different. The body of our Lord lies there, according to the much debated and altered words of Keble's hymn, 'Not in the heart, but in the hands.' The first act is to address the Almighty, recalling the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, and to declare that, in obedience to His command, he is now offered the true body of our Saviour.

There is a remarkable variation in the Eastern rite, where the Elevation takes place, not after the Consecration, but just before the Communion. The order of this and other rites is, of course, unessential. Some of these peculiarities are highly effective and edifying, from which the Church has, as it were, made her selection. Thus we find the deacon turning to the people, and in a loud voice proclaiming, 'Attendamus,' 'Let us attend,' or 'let us attend with the fear of God!' or with the Ethiopians, 'Let us behold!' Then after the Elevation, priests and people burst into wild shoutings, or acclamations. This is the Eastern custom of acclaiming everything that has been successfully achieved, just as we find the Italians doing on the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius.

After the Consecration the priest makes five signs of the Cross over the sacred Host; but, it should be noted, in what a different sense and purpose from heretofore. Up to this moment these signs have been so many benedictions—invoking of blessings

on inanimate matter. But now there would be no fitness in such, it would be the creature blessing the Creator. It is therefore a recognition of the virtues of the Cross, of the association of the Passion with our Lord Himself. This distinction shows how full of significance is every act of the Mass, what deep thought and study it bears, and how earnestly and carefully its every stage should be followed.

In a succeeding prayer we read: 'On which vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and with the same benignity with which Thou didst accept the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech.'

It might be thought that there was little to compare between these ancient and imperfect sacrifices and that august one of the new, and is peculiar. But it is held that our Lord has ever been offered upon earth, that the old sacrifices were, as it were, part and the figure of the new; just as St. Paul said of the Jews in the desert, who drank of the spiritual rock, 'which rock was Jesus Christ.' Besides, there is a curious literal similitude in the instances specified. Abel, 'the just man,' being put to death by his brother; Abraham being ready to sacrifice his son Isaac; while Melchisedech, the high priest, was actually the Son of God 'in the order of His priesthood.' The words, descriptive of Melchisedech's sacrifice, 'Holy host, spotless host,' were introduced into the canon by Pope Leo the Great, who declared that 'Melchisedech had so admirably represented Jesus Christ in his sacrifices, for he had not offered up the regular Jewish offerings, but the very symbols which our Redeemer had consecrated when charging them with His own Body and Blood.' What a claim or argument never

to address the Almighty for 'receiving favourably' our offering when He had received so favourably their older sacrifices !

The prayer that follows is a remarkable one, and has ever excited the deepest admiration for its force, grandeur, and efficacy. Some prayers are excellent in their intention, yet wanting in devout purpose. But others seem, like powerful levers, to 'prize open' the very gates of heaven. 'We beseech Thee,' it runs, 'Omnipotent God, command these things to be carried by the hands of Thy holy Angel to Thy altar on high, in sight of Thy Divine Majesty. That as many of us in participating at this altar shall have received the holy Body and Blood of Thy Son, we may be filled with all heavenly benediction and grace through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.' This prayer has been regarded with a mysterious awe and veneration, for it seems to point at something beyond our earthly appreciation, and to deal with high mysteries of heaven. 'Who can comprehend,' exclaims Florus, 'words so profound, so admirable, so astounding ; or who could speak of them fittingly ? To appraise their deep signification, veneration and awe were better employed than discussion.' And Pope Pius III., in the same sense, declares that human understanding can scarcely attempt to reach them. It is a prayer that Almighty God would accept and make efficacious the sacrifice now offered to Him. It is admitted that the 'Angel,' whose hands are thus to transport the illustrious victim, is no other than our Lord, for the Church holds that it is only He Himself that is fitted for so august an office. Father Le Courtier gives a pleasing figurative illustration of this prayer, which he likens to the ladder in Jacob's dream ; one end of this ladder resting on

the altar, the other reaching to heaven ; on the first step below Jesus Christ offering Himself under the sacred symbols, on the highest, our Saviour still ; while the Angel is still our Saviour, descending to us, and then ascending with the prayers and atonement of the sacrifice. It will be noted that this prayer is confined to those who have received, or are about to receive, the Communion, spiritual or otherwise, for this intimate bond is necessary to make it avail. At this place the Greeks observe a strange custom, that of mingling *warm* water in the chalice with the precious Blood. At the time of the reunion this practice was much objected to, but was allowed to be retained. For it was later urged by St. Germanus that ‘as blood and water flowed together from the side of Christ, thus hot water poured into the chalice at the Consecration gives a full type of the mystery to those who draw the holy liquid from the chalice, as *from the life-giving side of our Lord.*’

We are now arrived at a grave and truly important passage of the Mass wherein vast interests are involved. This is the recollection and commemoration of the dead and of our departed friends. It is a solemn, serious moment indeed ; there is a stillness, with a concentration of faculties ; for here, in proportion to this earnestness, we may really *do* much to help the dear loved ones who have travelled away from us, far out of this earth. Perhaps not very many think how irresistible a prayer or pleading becomes at such a moment, when we can join with the priest, his head bent down reverently to the living body of our Lord ; or who then feel how irresistible is any request made in obedience to the direction, ‘If you ask the Father anything *in My name*, He will give it to you.’ It

seems unkind, cruel, unfeeling even, to neglect such an opportunity or to be careless at such a moment. One might recall the image of those poor far-off imprisoned sculs who left us years and years ago, and who ever since have been working out their weary agonising servitude. Their wistful eyes are turned eagerly to earth, longing, praying, that those who loved them should, at so slight an expense of trouble, or even of recollection, use this precious opportunity.

Our own great poet who has touched all things, and the Catholic mysteries above all, with an unerring knowledge that is almost inspired, has left the best and most piteous image of the poor purgatorial soul and its sufferings. Says the Ghost of Hamlet's father :

“ My hour is almost come,
When *I to sulphurous and tormenting flames*
Must render up myself.

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I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night ;
And, for the day, confined *to fast in fires,*
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul ; freeze thy young blood ;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres ;
Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine :
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood.

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Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneal'd ;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
O horrible ! O horrible ! most horrible !”

‘Unhousel’d’ means without having received the holy Eucharist, *husel* being the Anglo-Saxon substitute for the Eucharist—‘disappointed,’ that is, unappointed, not fitted out for the last journey; while ‘unanealed’ was ‘unoiled,’ or unanointed. ‘No reckoning made,’ that is, unconfessed; sent to his account unabsolved, ‘with all his imperfections on his head.’ What a pregnant phrase! No wonder Hamlet bewails this state as ‘Horrible! most horrible!’

The first duty then is the generous and unselfish one of turning the great act just accomplished to the profit of those who need aid more than ourselves; for we can help ourselves, the dead cannot. With eyes bent down and fixed on the Host, the priest repeats this touching prayer: ‘Remember also, O Lord, Thy servants, male and female, who have gone before us, with the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace.’ Then he thinks of and names those to be prayed for. ‘To these,’ he goes on, ‘and to all who rest in Christ, we beseech Thee to grant a place of refreshment, light and peace, through the same Christ our Lord, amen!’ There are some picturesque variations in the Eastern rite as in the Coptic liturgy of St. Basil: ‘In like manner, remember also, O Lord, all those who have already fallen asleep in the priesthood and among laity; vouchsafe to give rest to their souls in the bosoms of our holy fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; bring them into a place of pureness by the waters of comfort in the Paradise of pleasure, where grief, and misery, and sighing are banished in the brightness of the saints.’

Here, on dyptichs, were written simple catalogues of names, which fell under three categories—names of saints, of benefactors, and of the

faithful, living ; and of the dead. The 'memento' was directed to the last of these, and in an old liturgy of St. Gregory, it is entitled, '*Said over the dyptichs.*' It is conceivable why the prayers for the dead should be reserved for this place ; for after the Consecration they may be urged with more irresistible force ; and there is also this pious reflection, that it was only on the death of our Saviour that the graves opened, and that thither He descended into limbo to announce their release to the just. It has been remarked that here the harsh word 'death' is not used, but 'the sleep of peace.' Among the early Christians, indeed, 'death' was never spoken of save as a form of sleep. There is something touchingly expressive in the form of this prayer which asks for the dead 'a place of refreshment, light, and peace,' and it has been pointed out that refreshment, or 'refrigerium,' is a relief of a cooling kind suggested by the burning pains of their situation. This then is a serious and vital moment in the Mass, most precious and capable of being turned to infinite profit. A moment that all who have lost those dear to them should watch and wait for. For is not a prayer at such a moment irresistible, and one to which all in the congregation should join their hearts ? It is enough to fancy the poor souls in the desolation of their prison, racked with sufferings, and, like the rich man, longing for that drop of cold water for their tongues. Indeed, one of the Doctors of the Church has the pious theory that during a Mass for the Dead those for whom it is offered find their torments suspended. With an agonized wistfulness they feel the approach of this moment ; there are their friends or relations in the church kneeling—a fervent aspiration, a heart-felt prayer joined to this memento will bring

them 'refreshment.' But, alas ! there are vacant eyes fixed on the altar—one is saying her beads ; the thoughts of another have at the moment wandered off, not to return till, it may be, the 'Agnus Dei.' And so the poor prisoners feel a fresh pang in this cruel neglect. The precious opportunity is lost. The congregation goes its way light of heart, with pleasant chatter ; but little thinking of the rueful sinking of heart of the poor forgotten souls, whom one short aspiration would have benefited !

In most Catholic countries this charitable forethought is shown by the priest invariably saying the 'De profundis' at the foot of the altar at the end of the Mass. In Ireland, where there are as many Masses said every day, up to eleven o'clock, as on Sundays, this is never omitted ; but in England the custom does not prevail.

In this connection there is a passage in Shakespeare so vital and powerful in its compressed meaning, as to present, in the most awful way, the tremendous issues of life's probation, and what follows. It runs—it is only a line and a half :

'He who does not think can never mourn.
Eternity mourns that.'

And a Protestant divine, the excellent Doctor Parr, has a passage on the confusion and hurry of the death-bed, which for force and power cannot be matched :

'The infinite importance,' he says, 'of what he has to do, the goading conviction that it must be done, the utter inability of doing it, the dreadful combinations in his mind of both the necessity and the incapacity, the despair of crowding the concerns of an age into a moment, the impossibility of be-

ginning a repentance which should have been completed, of setting about a peace which should have been concluded—all these complicated concerns without strength, without time, without hope, with a clouded memory, a disjointed reason, a wounded spirit, ill-defined terrors, remembered sins, anticipated punishment of an angry God, altogether intolerably aggravate the sufferings of a body which stands little in need of the insupportable burden of a distracted mind to aggravate his torments.'

Now, of all seasons for asking the Almighty to confer favours on ourselves, spiritual or temporal, is, beyond a doubt, the most choice and suitable here, when prayer is irresistible. We all know the assurance that, 'If you ask the Father anything in My name,' etc.; so here a compliance seems promised. But when we add to this the actual presence of our Lord in the flesh, the prayer must be acceptable. 'Assuredly,' says St. Jerome, 'the Lord grants all the favours for which we petition Him in the Mass, provided they be suitable to us; and what is far more admirable, He very often grants us that for which we do not petition Him, always provided that we place no obstacles to His holy desires.' Hence the eagerness, and delight, and profit with which so many have attended the early every-day morning Mass, which seems to have a more distinct meaning, to be more bound up with our daily life, than the official Sunday Mass.

This devotion to the daily Mass has been exhibited by many august personages. The Emperor Constantine, we are told, not only heard Mass every day in his palace, but used to take a portable altar with him on his campaigns; and the Emperor Lothair never omitted attending the holy sacrifices. King Henry III. of England used to hear no less

than three Masses daily, with all his Court. King Wenceslaus, of Bohemia, seems to have devoted himself to the altar, hearing Mass after Mass, kneeling on the bare floor, he himself serving the Mass, 'an office in which,' it is related, 'he comported himself with even more humility than even those in minor orders who were accustomed to perform the duty.' He took a particular pleasure in making his unleavened bread for the hosts, and with his royal hands used humbly and scrupulously plough the fields, sow the wheat, and cut the crop. He then ground the flour, and finally "formed the Hosts which were to be consecrated," and which he humbly, after his labours, presented to his priests, that they might be consecrated and converted into the Divine Body of Jesus Christ. The great doctor, St. Thomas of Aquin, after offering his own Mass, used himself to serve the Mass of another priest. Most pleasing, too, is to think how that great and amiable man, Sir Thomas More, so lately honoured by the Church, took the greatest delight in serving Mass, and once being warned by a certain Minister of State that the King would be displeased if he heard he had so humbled himself, made this reply, worthy of the occasion: 'My Lord, the King cannot be offended with the service I render to *his* Lord; nay, to the King of kings, and Lord of lords!'

'Serving Mass,' as it is called, should always be a welcome, as it is a highly-privileged function. And there is no doubt the sacrifice gains in edification by the spectacle of a devout person reverentially assisting—a reverence that must surely be felt when it is considered that he is actually contributing some share, though an humble one, in the great rite. No one feels, therefore, any incongruity when some

one of the congregation in his familiar every-day dress takes the place of the official acolyte. A pious writer, indeed, seems to lament that 'in our days this office should have devolved on mere boys and pious youths, though the grandest monarchs are not worthy of such an honour.' St. Bonaventura, indeed, calls it '*an angelic office*,' for during the Mass many angels are present clustered round the altar attending the consecration.

In some of the picturesque old churches of what may be called the 'dead cities' of Belgium, are to be seen quaint structures of pyramidal shape placed on the right hand of the high altar. These are tabernacles, richly decorated, encrusted with enamels and marbles, and of Eastern design. They were probably introduced by the Spaniards during their rule, as I have seen them in churches such as those of Nieuport and Furnes, on whose walls were read epitaphs of the Spanish hidalgos there interred.

On most altars are to be found reliquaries, ark-shaped, which often contain the most venerated of all relics—a piece of the true Cross. Sceptics are often merry on the multiplication of these fragments, which they contend are sufficient in bulk to form innumerable crosses. Calvin declared there was enough 'to freight a great ship.' But a laborious savant, M. Rohault de Henry, has made a list of all the portions known in Europe and Asia, and by elaborate calculations of the weight and size, has discovered that the whole, if added together, would only amount to nearly 'four million of cubic millemètres,' which would not go nearly to make up the bulk required to form the true Cross. Thus easily are such charges dissipated. There is a pretty legend connected with the tree

of which it was formed. On Adam's death three seeds from the tree of life were allowed by the Archangel to be placed under Adam, which grew into a cedar, a cypress, and a pine, in the Vale of Hebron. Of these were formed the rudder of the ark and the rod with which Moses smote the rock. Solomon cut down one of the trees and fashioned it into a beam for his Temple. On the despoilment of which it was thrown into the Pool of Bethesda, and at the time of the crucifixion floated up and was selected by the High Priest for the Cross. When discovered by the Empress Helena, she despatched one portion to Constantinople, where it was set up on a marble pillar in the market. The other was kept at Jerusalem, in a 'copher of silver.' She also found the inscription, which was brought to Rome, and deposited in the Basilica of Santa Croce, where it was hidden in the time of Valentinian, lest it should be stolen by the Goths; but it was seen in or about 570 by Antoninus Martyr, after whose time it disappeared, to be discovered again built up in an arch near the roof, enclosed in a leaden box, on the cover of which these words were engraved, 'Hic est titulus veræ Crocis.' It was found to be a little board about a hand's breadth and a half, much decayed, covered with a partially legible inscription in Latin and Greek, the writing being from right to left, Hebrew fashion. A line of writing has been broken off the upper parts, but parts of a few letters which remain may have been the Hebrew title.

The Dominicans after the Canon still extend their arms, as it were, in the form of a cross. This is the survival of what was the general custom, 'spreading his hands outaide' being the quaint description.

The mysterious silence and recollection of the Canon is now broken, and we hear the priest raising his voice with the words: 'Nobis quoque peccatoribus'; that is, 'To us sinners also'; at the same moment he strikes his breast, thus recalling the poor publican who stood afar off. As this appeal concerns the congregation, who should join in prayer, there is reason for speaking aloud here. His prayer runs: 'To us sinners, also Thy servants, confiding in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy Holy Apostles and martyrs—with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, Anastasia, and with all Thy saints, into whose company we beseech Thee receive us, not taking account of our deserts, but granting us mercy through Christ our Lord.'

It will be noted that here are named fifteen saints, eight men and seven women; and we might speculate why these had been selected out of the vast army of the Calendar. The reason is, they were the earlier martyrs; and they further represent the different conditions and orders of Prophets, Popes, Priests, Deacons, married persons, celibates, etc. These saints were held in special honour at Rome, and were thus naturally chosen for insertion, and their names placed at the head of the dyptichs. In France, about the ninth century, particular saints were sometimes added, such as St. Martin or St. Hilary. But this was only for a short period, when a return was made to the old practice of confining the selection to the martyrs who had sealed their faith with their blood, and thus merited this high distinction; for in this way they had imitated their Divine Master.

and made a sacrifice of their lives. There was, for a long time, a discussion as to which St. John was intended, whether the Baptist or the Evangelist; and it was not until 1824 that it was finally decided that St. John the Baptist was referred to.

On the declaration 'Per Christum Dominum nostrum,' this truly solemn declaration is made, which fitly brings the Canon to a close: 'By whom, O Lord, dost Thou create, sanctify (✠), vivify (✠), bless, and (✠) furnish to us all these good things. Through Him (✠), and with Him (✠), and in Him (✠), is to Thee, God the Father (✠) omnipotent, in the unity of the Holy Ghost (✠), all honour and glory through all ages of ages.'

In this prayer we again emphasize the reason for having made so many requests through our Saviour; that is because God grants all through Him. There is a separate and distinct significance in the words 'by Him,' 'with Him,' and 'through Him,' which has been the subject of much exposition by old theologians, even so far back as the ninth century. '*By* Him,' says Florus; 'that is, as the true Mediator between God and man; *with* Him, as God equal to God; *in* Him, as being consubstantial with the Father.'

No less than eight signs of the Cross are made during this prayer, of which five are made with the Host itself. Of these three are made over the chalice, and two between the chalice and the priest. There is a fresh significance in these positions. For the three signs are joined to the words 'with Him,' etc., to mark that the Host and the wine in the chalice are *both* indivisibly Jesus Christ. The other two, between the priest and the chalice, are connected with the words 'the Father' and

‘the Holy Ghost,’ to show that we offer the Cross to *Them*. Then, the priest, holding the sacred Host over the chalice, lifts both together, ‘a little,’ as it is enjoined. This was originally known as the second, or ‘the little Elevation,’ that is, of both the elements united, and in the last century, in Paris, it was marked by regular ceremonial adoration, for the bells were rung, the canons removed their caps and turned to the altar. Even recently in these countries the bells used to be rung at this moment. It will thus be noted what meaning attends all these little rites and ceremonies, and which still retain an abbreviated significance, as it were. How few, for instance, have noted this act of the lifting of the chalice and Host; or suppose that it is meant as a reiteration of the great act just performed—a showing forth publicly that the bread and wine together are now the Body and Blood of our Lord.

So lately as two centuries ago it was the custom in some dioceses to perform the ‘little elevation’ when saying the words, ‘Through all ages of ages’ (‘Per omnia sæcula sæculorum’), and Father le Brun says, writing in 1709, that it was to be wished that this custom were restored. For he says it would emphasize the fact that these words bring to a conclusion the whole Canon, and would distinguish it in a more marked way from what follows. To many who follow the Mass, the words appear to be the opening of a new act, the priest, as it were, breaking silence with a prelude to the Pater Noster which follows. But it is, in fact, as we have seen, merely the conclusion of an aspiration, ‘To Whom be all honour and glory, through all ages of ages!’ There is a sublime ring in these words, and a natural unintended dramatic effect in

this utterance aloud, together with the answering 'Amen!'

The Pater Noster is introduced by a few words of preface, conceived in a lowly spirit, 'We venture to say.' Instructed by the saving precepts, and following the Divine instructions, we venture to say, 'Our Father.' This simple formula is of old date, and the phrase, 'venture' or 'dare to say,' is used by St. Jerome and St. Cyprian, when speaking of the Apostles. '*Divina institutione formati*,' is hard to translate, but it means that our Saviour Himself gave us this august form of prayer, and invited us to use it. This prayer and its recitation was ever thought of the highest solemnity and importance, owing to this Divine origin, so much so that in the early Church, as Optat of Milevium records, confession and absolution took place immediately after the Canon, so that those who repeated it should be in a fitting state. In the Greek Church this prayer was joined in by the congregation, but in the Roman rite it is only the last portion, 'but deliver us from evil,' that is thus uttered; and it has been justly said this is, as it were, an epitome of all the rest, and therefore suited for joint utterance. It will be noted that the priest answers the congregation with 'Amen,' 'in a low voice,' as Father le Brun says. 'As the priest communes often alone and in secret with God, he thus renews this private intercourse with "Amen," as who should say, "Yes, Lord; we know the greatness of the evils that assail us. Deliver us from them."'

Now follows a potent prayer, the '*Libera*':

'Free us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and by the intercession of the blessed and ever-glorious Mary, ever

Virgin, Mother of God, with Thy blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the Saints, graciously give peace in our days, so that, assisted by the succour of Thy mercy, we may be ever free from sin, and secure from all disturbance, through Jesus Christ,' etc.

It will be noted here the selection made of St. Andrew ; but at Rome this saint was held in almost equal honour with St. Peter, though in the most ancient liturgies other saints were introduced.

The purport of this earnest prayer is, as we see, 'for peace in our times,' and it has been said that it was an addition made during a season of wars or persecutions. But a larger view is surely a prayer for religious peace of the soul, and for freedom from disturbance of sin.

Now follows the 'breaking of the Host,' which is done as the last words of the prayer are said, 'through the same Jesus Christ,' etc. This, of course, is in imitation of the action of our Saviour, Who took bread and broke it. The Orientals use large loaves, which they break, and do not cut. There is some variation of rite in the number of portions into which the Host is broken. In the early Roman, one portion was placed in the chalice, a second was for the communion of priest and assistants, while the third was 'reserved' upon the altar. This division into three portions is still retained. In the old Spanish Mozarabian rite there is a singular variation, the Host being divided into nine portions, intended to have symbolical meaning. They were ranged in the form of the Cross on the altar, and denoted the incarnation, birth, death, and resurrection of our Lord, circumcision, passion, etc.

At the conclusion of the 'Libera,' the priest

again raises his voice to the words, 'Through all ages of ages!' and being answered 'Amen!' prays: 'May the peace of the Lord be always with you!' to which 'And with thy spirit' (that is, 'with you') is the answer. When these last responses are uttered, the priest allows the smallest of the three portions of the Host to fall into the chalice, with the words: 'May this mingling and consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be done for us, Who receive unto life everlasting. Amen.'

It was the custom at this point, as recorded in the old liturgies, to mingle ordinary wine with a small portion of the consecrated wine, and this was given to communicants. The amount of added wine was in proportion to the number of communicants.

In these early days, too, the Blessed Sacrament denoted the strict union among the faithful in a very useful and particular way. We have seen how the Popes were accustomed to send to bishops and others portions of the Host, which they had consecrated. In Rome this was done every Sunday, and the recipient placed the sacred particle in his chalice at the particular passage of the Mass at which we are now arrived. On their consecration, bishops received from the officiating bishop a Host of large size, a portion of which was each day consumed. The 'reserved' portion was often carried in a casket before the Pope, and solemnly adored. It was then placed in the chalice just before the 'Agnus Dei,' and consumed with the rest. There is something remarkable in this truly celestial bond of union, and it is an illustration of the intimate way in which the Blessed Sacrament was bound up with daily life.

Now follows the 'Agnus Dei,' one of the most touching appeals in the Mass. This prayer was in use so far back as the time of Pope Sergius in the seventh century, when it was introduced. The three repetitions were the same, ending with 'Have mercy on us!' And this was observed in the Latin Church down to a recent period. But about the eleventh century the third appeal was changed into 'Give us peace.' In Masses for the Dead, this prayer is changed to 'Give them rest ! Give them rest ! Give them eternal rest.' With, in the old Ambrosian rite, this addition, 'and a place of indulgence with Thy saints in glory.' This is keeping with the unselfishness, as it were, which reserves the most efficacious moments for the departed ones. The prayer that next follows is also omitted in Masses for the Dead, and for the same reason :

'Lord Jesus Christ, Who hast said to Thy Apostles, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you ; regard not my sins, but the faith of Thy Church, and vouchsafe to give her peace and union according to Thy will.' St. Augustin has explained the difference between the peace 'left,' and the peace 'given' by our Lord, the former being the natural peace, born of grace and a good conscience ; the other our Lord gives assurance of for eternity. It will be noted that this is a personal prayer, for the priest speaks of 'my sins.' This is natural and fitting, as he is now about to receive the sacred Body and Blood of our Lord.

At High Masses, while the priest is thus engaged, the ceremony of interchanging the kiss of peace is going on, which was formerly carried out by the whole congregation, but which is now symbolized by the kissing of the Pax.

It might be well imagined what ought to be the character of the strain chanted by the choir to the imploring words of the 'Agnus Dei'—humble, soothing, earnest, and even pathetic—yet our great masters, our Mozarts, and Haydns, seemed to gather all their most obstreperous forces to clamour forth, as it were, these petitions for grace and peace, where there is, indeed, no peace. Who does not recall this passage in the much-vaunted Twelfth Mass, and the unseemly riot and roarings, with which the words are emphasized, where drums, and trumpets, and pedals, and shrieking trebles, all join in the hurly-burly, and put devotion to flight ! That this barbarism were abolished is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and with it the whole tribe of 'operatic' Masses.

The next prayer is to this effect :

'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, Who, by the will of the Father and the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me by this Thy most holy Body and Blood from all my iniquities and all evils : make me always to adhere to Thy commandments, and never let me be separated from those, who with God the Father,' etc.

The Communion is now but a few moments off, and note what concentrated fervour and point is found in the next short prayer :

'Let not the perception of Thy Body, Lord Jesus Christ, which I, unworthy, venture to take, turn to my judgment and condemnation, but, by Thy bounty, may it serve as a protection both of soul and body, and as a salutary remedy, Who liveth and reigneth with God the Father in the unity of His Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.'

It is remarkable that in these three prayers the

priest addresses himself directly to our Saviour, in contrast to other prayers in the Mass, when God the Father is invoked through the Son; and the conclusion, instead of following the usual form, addressed to God '*through* Jesus Christ,' takes the more unusual shape of 'Who livest and reignest God,' etc; in which, too, is a direct re-assertion of the equality of the Son to the Father.

These remarkable prayers are not found in the more ancient liturgies. But though all that had gone before was accounted sufficient preparation, still it was thought that the moment favoured a more direct and earnest appeal; accordingly several prayers were used *ad libitum*, until the Church at last selected these two. So admirable, so pointed, so business-like, if one might use the phrase, are these prayers that, as F. le Brun says, the faithful could not do better than adopt them for their own use, in preference to many rather diffuse and conventional forms found in the Prayer Books. 'In prayers of this class,' he adds, 'there are protestations and promises, which too often scarcely suit our state of weakness, shown by unfortunate relapses. But the prayers used here by the Church properly correspond to our state and our needs, and express the dispositions in which we ought to find ourselves.'

The moment has now arrived for the consummation, and it will be seen that anyone who, with due deliberation and anxious care, has followed the priest all through these steps and stages, will be in fitting frame of mind to receive the Lord of heaven and earth. Repeating these words, 'I will take the Heavenly Bread and call upon the name of the Lord,' he holds the two portions of the Sacred Host in his hands; then proceeds to repeat three

times, 'Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof ; say but a word, and my soul shall be healed.' This earnest, familiar, and most appropriate protestation is borrowed from the Centurion's in the Gospel, with a slight variation. So far back as the time of Origen, the faithful have always been exhorted to use this affecting phrase, which expresses both a fitting state of humility, as well as a confidence that cure will be found. In two or three of the old liturgies there is found a variation of the declaration, 'I will take the Heavenly Bread,' in lieu of which is read, 'Lo ! most kindly Jesus, what I have longed for I now see ; lo ! most merciful King, what I have hoped for I now hold : so, I implore, may I be united to Thee in heaven, since with joy I now receive, all unworthy as I am, Thy Body and Blood upon earth ! Hail for ever, most holy flesh, my chief and everlasting sweetness !'

Slow and reverently making the sign of the cross with the Sacred Host, he repeats these solemn words : '*The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting. Amen.*' Then receives.

This is always an edifying, if not an awful moment. At the High Mass there is a stillness and expectancy ; the figures of the deacon and sub-deacon are bent low down ; the souls of the pious in the congregation join in spirit ; even the careless or indifferent are recalled by the impressive lull. Now gathering up the particles into the chalice with the paten, he says :

'What shall I return to the Lord for all He has given to me ? I will take the chalice of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will call the Lord in praise, and I shall be safe from my enemies.'

The phrase, 'chalice of salvation,' is found in Psalm cxv.—another instance of the extraordinary appropriateness of the figures and phrases of the Old Testament to the great sacrifices of the New. He then drinks, saying :

'The Blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting. Amen.'* In the Strasburg, and various other Missals, the phrase was introduced here, 'Et vevum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis.'

After the priests' communion come the ablutions, which used to be styled, in a plain, forcible old phrase, '*the rinsings*.' In the old mediæval days in England, the priest used to turn the chalice down on its side, so as to drain into the paten while he repaired to the corner of the altar, or to the Piscina, to wash his hands in pure water. During the ablutions he says: 'Grant, O Lord, that what we have received with our mouth we may

* A saintly writer on the Mass gives point to this application of the Psalm: 'No, no! take heart,' he says, 'for the manner of thanking our good God completely was taught us by holy David, who, beholding with prophetic eyes this Divine sacrifice, clearly confesses that nothing save the holy Mass can render due thanks to God. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?" asks the Psalmist; and then, answering himself, he continues, "I will take the cup of salvation;" (according to another version) "I will raise on high the chalice of the Lord." Bear in mind, likewise, that this sacrifice was instituted principally by our Redeemer for this end, namely, to acknowledge the Divine beneficence and to thank it; and it is on this account that it is emphatically called *Eucharist*, which is the *giving of thanks*.'

The habitual hearer of the Mass should keep this truth steadily before him, making an exertion of the mind and 'an act' in this sense—a very different thing from a mechanical 'hearing Mass,' that is, merely listening or looking on as it is celebrated.

receive with a pure mind, and from a temporal gift become for us an everlasting remedy.'

This prayer was used by the faithful so far back as the ninth century for Communion, and is appropriate. At the second Ablution he repeats this prayer: 'May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have taken, and Thy Blood, which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels; and grant that no spot of crime may remain in me, whom the pure and holy Sacraments have renewed. Who livest, etc.'

The custom of the *Eulogia*, or distribution of the *pain bène*, as in France to this day, has an intimate connection with the Communion. This was really a symbolic reception of the Holy Eucharist—and those who received it might consider themselves, according to the quaint expression in 'Piers Plowman,' '*God's guests*;' and a prayer was added that it might be 'instead of housel,' should it be their fate to die on that day. So deep was this feeling that it was held incumbent to receive it fasting; and even those who did not attend the Mass were enjoined to fast. 'Still I rede,' says Robert of Brunne, 'that thou eat not till thou hast holy brede.' It was believed, indeed, that this pious custom gave its efficacy to other food. And it has been suggested that our familiar word 'break fast'—first introduced in the fifteenth century—may have been connected with this observance.

All who assisted at Mass in these early ages were expected to communicate. But there were a large class of exceptions. Of the penitents, alone, the adulterous were placed in four classes: The weeping; the listeners; the prostrated; and the associated. Having passed through three degrees, the penitent had to wait two years in the last category, the whole term of atonement covering

fifteen years. Hence the seriousness and importance of what the Mass was in these early days, as there was then seen during the sacrifice, all these various classes of the interdicted, as well as of the catechumens, who were ordered to retire at the solemn moment. Sinners in general were allowed to assist at the sacrifice, but interdicted from Communion, which was in itself a public penance. In a case of manslaughter, the Council of Nantes thus dealt with the offender: For two years he was not allowed to join with the faithful in prayer, or to communicate. Two years later he was allowed to join in the prayers; and in five years was to be restored altogether. All this is evidence of the dread importance of the Sacrifice, and of the Sacrament of Communion, to partake of which seemed then as much an object as the gaining of some desirable worldly object, and the securing of ordinary food and support.

In Paris, about the time of Archbishop Harlay, A.D. 1685, it was the custom when the Communion was administered, and on the Bishop saying, 'May the Body of our Lord, etc.,' for the communicant to answer, 'Amen,' at the same time kissing the hand of the Bishop. In the case of Communion at the end of the sixth century the Holy Host was placed in *the hand* of each communicant, with the words 'Corpus Christi'—'The Body of Christ,' on which the recipient answered, 'Amen'—that is, 'It is true'—'I believe it.' The communicant might take it to his home and 'reserve it.' So early as the Council of Toledo, in 400, we find it proclaimed 'that anyone taking away the Holy Eucharist from the church should be treated as sacrilegious; and Venerable Bede, describing the

end of a monk called Cedmon, in 680, says, 'that when the Holy Eucharist was brought to him,' he took it in his hand and asked all those standing round him had they any grievance against him. At ordination the Holy Eucharist was placed in the hands of the Cardinal, who consumed a small portion and retained the rest for forty days.

In the Mass the communicant will certainly find the best, shortest, most pointed and most efficacious prayers for his purpose. Feeling his own deficiency and shortcomings—doubtful how to amend, what could he find better, as he approaches the altar-rail, than the simple regret, 'Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: *say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.*' This seems to involve all. It describes exactly his state and its remedy, and sets out the true doctrine. Indeed, this prayer, repeated often, might be enough; and the oftener it is repeated the more true and effective it will seem.

Again, the beautiful prayer said by the priest before receiving breathes the spirit of the most tender humility; and, if uttered in its own genuine spirit, how almost irresistible it must be with Him to whom it is addressed.

In the 'hours' of Charles le Chaise, King of France, which found its way to the library of Colbert, are some prayers for Mass and Communion.

'Receive, Holy Trinity, undivided Unity, this oblation which I offer Thee by the hands of Thy priest, for myself, a sinner, and most miserable of all men, for my innumerable sins with which I have sinned before Thee, in word, deed, and thought, that Thou mayest overlook all that has passed, and

guard me for the future ; for the health of my body and soul, and in thanksgiving for all the blessings I daily enjoy. What shall I repay Thee, O Lord, for all that Thou hast lavished on me ? This offering of salvation I presume to offer Thee and Thy Name. I shall invoke praising ; I shall call upon the Lord, and He will save me from my enemies.'

And again :

'Holy Lord, Omnipotent Father, Eternal God, grant me that I may so receive the Body and Blood of Christ, Thy Son, O Lord, that I may deserve to obtain pardon for my sins and be filled from Thy Holy Ghost. For Thou art God, and in Thee is God, and beside Thee there is no other whose reign endureth for ever.'

It will be seen that the first of these prayers is but a variation of the offertory, thus showing how profitable it has always been thought to draw from these pure and sacred wells.

It is to be noted that the Council of Narbonne, in 1609, allowed the words of Communion, '*Domine non sum dignus*,' to be said in French ; and St. Francis de Sales, in his Ritual, confirms this and supplies the French translation. When Father le Brun wrote, in 1716, he mentions that it was still the custom in many churches of France to present wine and a cloth to the faithful after communicating ; he notes also that when Communion was administered to certain female religious communities, the phrase, '*Domine non sum dignus*,' was altered to the feminine '*digna*.'

The Mass is now virtually concluded ; all that is momentous is completed. Under the name of Communion and Post Communion a few verses of the Psalms are recited. The priest comes to the

centre of the altar, and gives the congregation 'dismissal,' with the 'Ite missa est,'—'allez c'est le renvoi,' as it runs in French. It is difficult to give the sense in English, except by 'Go, all is over!' Among the Romans there was a similar phrase for dismissing assemblies. *Illicet*!—that is, 'ire licet.' There are also variations in the Greek and other liturgies: as 'Go in peace!' 'Let us go in peace!' and the like.

At High Mass the deacon is deputed to proclaim the dismissal; and at Paris, Laon, Metz, Angers, the priest used to say the words in a low tone to the deacon, who repeated them aloud. In other French churches there was solemn ceremonial, the deacon kneeling and kissing the chasuble of the celebrant, before proclaiming the dismissal.

It is not, however, from this phrase that the Mass takes its name, but from the earlier dismissal of the catechumens; and though it may seem that this was but an incident, and hardly sufficient to furnish a name for the sacrifice, it really signifies the essence of the whole. For this jealous exclusion seems to point and emphasize the awful sacrifice, and the responsibility cast on those who were privileged to remain, just as the dismissal of the wicked, and the calling of the elect, would express the main elements of our faith.

During this pause, before giving the Benediction, the priest recites this efficacious prayer, which seems to recapitulate all that has been done.

'May the homage of my servitude, O Holy Trinity, be pleasing to you, and grant that the sacrifice which I so unworthily have presented to the eyes of Thy Majesty may be acceptable to Thee; and by Thy mercy may it be propitiatory for

me and for all for whom I have offered it, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.'

Having given the Blessing, the Gospel of St. John is now recited. This was the last addition to the Mass, though it seems to have been included in the private prayers of the priest.

Such, then, is THE MASS. As we follow it in all its details, does it not seem to be a casket of jewels, and filled with rich gold and silver? What a wealth of significance in every incident and movement! How each is linked to the great central Act! He who hears Masses, bearing in mind the meaning and value of each movement and prayer, and who turns each to profit, will have 'minted money' indeed. For him, it will be no series of rites—too often found tedious—but a treasury of graces. 'Oh, how great and honourable,' cries out the author of the Imitation, 'is the office of priest, to whom it is given to consecrate with sacred words the Lord of Majesty; to bless Him with their lips, to hold Him with their hands, to receive Him with their own mouth, and to administer Him to others.'

And again, 'A priest clad in his sacred vestments is Christ's viceregent to pray to God for himself, and for all the people in a suppliant and humble manner. He has before him and behind him the sign of the Cross of the Lord, that he may always remember the passion of Christ. When a priest celebrates the honours of God, he rejoices the angels, he edifies the Church, he helps the living, he obtains rest for the dead, and makes himself partaker of all that is good.'

In fine, as a holy man exclaimed: 'Who could ever have imagined that the tongue of a man, which of itself has not power to lift a straw from the ground,

would have been endowed by Divine grace with a power—oh, how stupendous!—that can cause the Son of God to descend from heaven on earth? This power far excels that of being able to remove mountains, drain seas dry, or regulate the motions of the planets; nay more, the possession of this power, to a certain extent, rivals that first *fiat* by which God created all things out of nothing, and in a certain sense it seems to excel that other *fiat* by which the great Virgin attracted the Eternal Word to her bosom.'

THE END.

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